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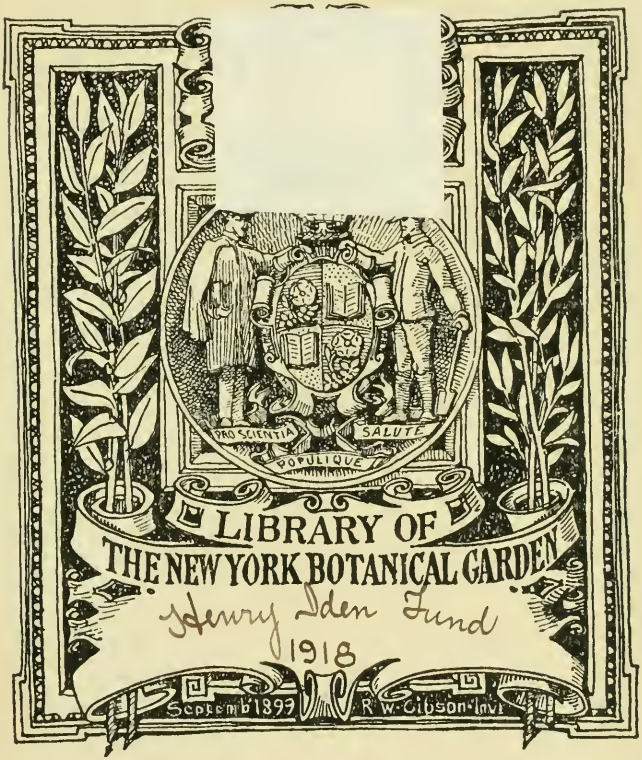

The Wild-Flowers of Selborne & Other Papers

DESIGN FOR A SCHOOL PROPOSED TO BE ERECTED AT SELBORNE AS A MEMORIAL OF GILBERT WHITE

The Wild-Flowers of Selborne and other Papers

by John Vaughan, M.A.

Rector of Droxford and Hon. Canon of Winchester

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PREFACE

In deference to the wishes of many friends the writer has collected the following articles, the outcome of a few hours of leisure in a busy life. In doing so, he desires to express his obligations to the editors of the various magazines in which the papers originally appeared for their kind permission to reprint them. To the courteous editor of *Longmans* his thanks are especially due, for the majority of the articles were published in the pages of that excellent magazine, the recent withdrawal of which he, with many others, regrets. He also wishes to offer his acknowledgments to the editors of the *Cornhill*, *Temple Bar*, *Chambers's Journal*, *The Monthly Packet*, and *The Churchman* for like favours. The papers are reprinted almost entirely in their original form: it seemed best not to attempt to recast them, even if here and there a slight repetition be discernible.

Among the illustrations special interest attaches to the frontispiece, which represents the design of a school which it was proposed to erect at Selborne as a memorial to Gilbert White. The original sketch was lately discovered by Mr. John Lane in a cottage

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at Selborne, and has now been presented by him to the British Museum, where it is catalogued under Hampshire Topography.

May the writer, in conclusion, express the hope that these essays may please those to whom "the glamour of the earth" is already more than a fancy, and that they may lead others to share with him that "fresh delight in simple things," which is such an unfailing source of happiness to those who possess it.

Droxford Rectory,
22nd January 1906.

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In the centre of the Cover is a reproduction of The Morley Sundial

THE WILD-FLOWERS OF SELBORNE

ONE hundred years have passed away since Gilbert White was laid to rest in Selborne churchyard, and those years have been years of considerable progress in the study of botany. In White's day botany as a science can hardly be said to have existed, and so it is not surprising to find that he considered it "needless work" to enumerate all the plants of his neighbourhood. However, in the Forty-first Letter to Daines Barrington he gives a short list of the rarer and more interesting plants, together with the spots where they were to be found. It is the purpose of the present paper to compare the botany of Selborne as chronicled by Gilbert White in 1778 with what we know of it to-day.

The most striking feature in the scenery of the parish is undoubtedly the "Hanger," covered now, as in White's time, with beeches, "the most beautiful," as he thought them, "of forest trees." The zigzag path up the face of the hill is still crowned by the Wishing-stone, from which, in clear weather, an extensive view of the surrounding country may be obtained; the horizon is bounded by the Southdowns,

and the waters of Wolmer Pond gleam in the distance. In wet seasons, the soil of the zigzag being chalk, the path is so slippery as to be almost dangerous. In early summer the dog-rose puts forth its delicate blossoms, and the long stems of honeysuckle scramble over the bushes. Later on the autumnal gentian, or fellwort, may be found.

Down below, a little further along the ridge of the hill, may be seen, through a gap made by some winter storm in the dense forest of beech-trees, the house in which White lived. There it nestles in the valley, beneath the shadow of the "beech-grown hill"; altered, indeed, by the hand of restoration, and enlarged considerably beyond its former dimensions, but yet, in part at least, just as the old naturalist left it. The wing which contained his study and bedroom remains untouched. The old staircase is still there. You may see the room in which he slept, with a heavy beam running across the ceiling, and the windows looking out on the Hanger. Outside on the lawn stands White's sun-dial, while the brick pathway—four bricks wide—still runs out into the meadow beyond. This pathway formerly led to a summer-house, which unfortunately was allowed to go to ruin, and no trace of it now remains. Not far off, among the long grass of the meadow, the leaves of the wild tulip may at the right season be found, but it is many years since a flower has been seen. In the summer of 1780 a pair of honey-buzzards built their nest upon a tall slender beech near the middle of the Hanger, and from the summer-house below White could watch them at their work. Here, too, the fern-owls or goatsuckers glided about in the evening twilight; and one summer a pair of hoopoes

frequented the spot. On the Hanger still flourishes, as it flourished a hundred years ago, though not in such abundance, the stinking hellebore, or setterwort. This handsome plant may often be seen in shrubberies and garden-walks, but in a wild state it is not often met with. In the good old times it seems to have been much sought after by those learned in the properties of herbs. "The good women," says White, "give the leaves powdered to children troubled with worms; but," he adds, "it is a violent remedy, and ought to be administered with caution." As late as 1845 a child died at Southampton from the effects of this so-called remedy administered by its grandmother. The name "setterwort" reveals another curious use of this plant. "Husbandmen," says old Gerarde, "are used to make a hole, and put a piece of the root into the dewlap of their cattle, as a *seton*, in cases of diseased lungs, and this is called pegging or *settering*." Among the brushwood, on the top of the hill, there grew in White's time the *Daphne Mezereum*. This fine shrub, with its pink fragrant flowers, which appear in early spring before the leaves, may often be seen in gardens in the neighbourhood, but on Selborne Hanger it is no longer to be found. The last plant has been removed into some cottage garden. The spurge laurel, with its evergreen crown of shining leaves and dark poisonous berries, is everywhere abundant. In the month of August, the sickly-looking yellow *Monotropa*, or bird's nest, may be found in plenty under the shady beeches; and about the same time, or a little later, that rare orchis, the violet helleborine, will be in flower. This plant is, perhaps, to a botanist the most interesting of the Selborne Flora. The trade of a truffle-hunter is all but extinct. Now

and then a man comes round with truffles for sale, but not often. The last of the old race died not long since in a hamlet within a few miles of Selborne. A hundred years ago truffles abounded, White tells us, in the Hanger and High Wood. They probably abound now at the right seasons, but the supply from France having swamped the English market the search for them has become no longer profitable. And so the profession of truffle-hunting is gone.

In the churchyard the ancient yew-tree, "probably coëval with the church," sheds its pollen in clouds of dust every spring. The trunk measured upwards of 23 feet in circumference in White's time; in 1823 Cobbett found it to be 23 feet 8 inches; it has now increased to 25 feet 2 inches. This is among the largest yew-trees in Hampshire. On the north side of the chancel a small head-stone marks the spot where the old naturalist lies. His grave is in keeping with the beautiful simplicity of his life. No ostentatious monument covers his last resting-place; only a head and footstone; on the former, under 2 feet in height, is inscribed the letters "G. W.," and the date, "June 26, 1793." Between the low lichen-covered stones not even a mound is raised, but the grass waves above him, and the daisies bloom.

From the churchyard a path leads down the Lyth, towards the old Priory, about a mile distant. The Priory was dissolved by Henry VIII., and not a stone of it remains. The site is now occupied by a modern farmhouse, known as the Priory Farm. In the garden a stone coffin may be seen, and a few encaustic tiles, but no further trace of the Augustinian convent meets the eye. The path down the valley is most picturesque, and was a favourite walk

of Gilbert White. In one of his poems he thus speaks of it:—

> "Adown the vale, in lone, sequester'd nook,
> Where skirting woods imbrown the dimpling brook,
> The ruin'd convent lies; here wont to dwell
> The lazy canon 'midst his cloister'd cell;
> While Papal darkness brooded o'er the land
> Ere Reformation made her glorious stand:
> Still oft at eve belated shepherd-swains
> See the cowl'd spectre skim the folded plains."

Now, as when those lines were written, the wild everlasting pea climbs among the brambles of the hedgerow, and in the copse beyond, the small teasel still grows in abundance, together with herb-paris, and orpine or live-long. Several species of orchis may be found in the meadow, including the green-winged orchis, so called from the strongly-marked green veins of the sepals, and the twayblade. The curious bird's-nest orchis, with its tangled mass of short, fleshy root-fibres, supposed to resemble a bird's nest, flowers in June beside the pathway, while just within the shadow of the trees sweet woodruff grows. Later on large patches of musk mallow will be out in the meadow. One plant, not mentioned by White, but now to be found in great abundance in a swampy piece of meadow land down the valley, is the bistort (twice-twisted) or snake-weed, so called on account of its large twisted roots. It is a handsome plant, with its cylindrical spike of flesh-coloured flowers, and of rare occurrence in Hampshire, and, had it existed in its present locality in the eighteenth century, could hardly have escaped White's notice. Another plant not mentioned is the snowdrop, which blossoms freely

every spring in a wood hard by. In the damper parts of the valley near the stream the common soft rush is very abundant; this is the plant which a hundred years ago was gathered for the purpose of making candles, the process of which is fully described by White in one of his letters. Here, too, the red spikes of *rumex* mingle with the white flowers of meadow-sweet and the purple blossoms of thistle and self-heal, while the air is full of the scent of water-mint. On the rising ground, in an open part of the wood which overshadows the valley, large patches of French-willow are in blossom, and the large rose-coloured flowers make a fine show against the dark green back-ground. The red thread-like stems of the creeping cinquefoil trail all over the ground, and star the pathway through the wood with their showy yellow flowers.

The "hollow lanes" present an even more rugged appearance than they did in White's time. He then described them as "more like watercourses than roads, and as bedded with naked rag for furlongs together. In many places they are reduced sixteen or eighteen feet beneath the level of the fields, and after floods and in frosts exhibit very grotesque and wild appear-ances." These hollow lanes are no longer used as thoroughfares, a new road to Alton having been made some years ago. In places it is hardly now possible even to walk along them, so overgrown are they with rank herbage. Here and there boughs of hazel, ash, or maple meet overhead, while coarse *umbelliferæ* and the tangled stems of briar and dog-rose obstruct the narrow way. In places the perpendicular sides, often 18 feet high, are bare of herbage, and present a naked surface of white freestone, broken by the gnarled roots

of pollard-trees, and split in every direction by the winter's frost. Where the sunlight can penetrate these gloomy hollows, flowers soon open their bright petals, and purple foxgloves and the yellow St. John's wort lend colour to the scene. In early spring the golden saxifrage blooms freely as it did a hundred years ago, and on the very spot where Gilbert White found the green-hellebore or Bear's-foot the plant still maintains a flourishing existence. The tutsan, so precious to the old herbalists, may also be found in the rocky lanes, and ferns now as then abound. But though abundant they are confined comparatively to but few species; and the rare moonwort, which used to grow at Selborne, has not been seen for many years.

The Forest of Wolmer, three-fifths of which before the formation of the parish of Blackmoor lay in the parish of Selborne, is full of interest to the naturalist. Though now partially enclosed and planted with oak and larch trees, snipe and teal continue to breed there in considerable numbers; and occasionally, especially in hard winters, rarer wild-fowl are seen. White enumerates but few of the forest plants; he mentions, however, four as growing in the bogs of Bin's Pond. Of these, the round-leaved and the long-leaved sundew still exist in abundance; and the wiry stems of the creeping bilberry, with its bright red flowers and small evergreen leaves, of which the margins are always rolled back, may also be found, but not in any quantity; while the marsh cinquefoil has altogether disappeared. The fruit of the creeping bilberry makes excellent tarts, and in places where the plant is plentiful is much sought after. Whortleberries—first-cousins to cranberries—known in the district as "whorts," abound on "the dry hillocks of Wolmer

Forest," and are gathered by the gipsies and sold in the towns and villages. Hound's-tongue, a stout plant with lurid purple flowers, and a strong disagreeable smell like that of mice, grows in several parts of the forest; and in one particular spot a few plants of the rare white horehound, covered, as its name suggests, with white woolly down, and strongly aromatic—once a famous remedy for coughs—may be found, together with a few specimens of motherwort, a plant very seldom met with in the neighbourhood. In some places a North American plant, with perfoliate leaves and small white flowers, called *Claytonia*, after an American botanist, has established itself; and once a specimen of dame's-violet was found. In spring the pretty little Teesdalia covers the sandy heath; and on a bank the tower mustard grows, and the uncommon —at least about Selborne—hoary cinquefoil. On a "hanger" in a neighbouring parish thousands of golden daffodils dance and flutter in the breeze every spring, and people come for miles round to gather them. At the foot of the "Hanger," in a small wet copse, the lungwort grows. This particular copse is full of it, but you may search every other wood in the neighbourhood in vain. The flowers somewhat resemble the cowslip, only their colour is purple; indeed, some people call the plant the Jerusalem cowslip. Not far from the copse in which the lungwort grows is an old disused chalk-pit, and in this pit the deadly nightshade is abundant. It is the most dangerous of British poisonous plants. The dark purple berries, as large as cherries, are tempting to children, and fatal cases of poisoning sometimes occur. Fortunately, it is a plant of rare occurrence and is mostly found in the neighbourhood of ruins.

GILBERT WHITE

THE interest in Gilbert White, and in all that concerns the parochial and natural history of Selborne, continues unabated. New editions of the *History* are constantly appearing; and lately a life of the naturalist, in two large volumes, by his great-grand-nephew, has been published. A large mass of correspondence, never before made public, has been brought together; and many interesting details with regard to the daily life of the great naturalist are for the first time given to the world.

It is well known that Gilbert White remained all his life a bachelor; and it has been asserted by some of his biographers—including the late Professor Bell of Selborne—that this was due to an unrequited attachment from which the naturalist never recovered. The lady in question is said to have been Hester Mulso, who afterwards became Mrs. Chapone, the sister of his lifelong friend John Mulso, Rector of Meonstoke and Canon of Winchester. This story, Mr. Holt-White is at pains to show, has absolutely no foundation, and it must be admitted that the series of letters from Mulso to White, now for the first time published, gives no encouragement to the idea; "nor," adds his latest biographer, "is any tradition of the disappointed affections known among the family of the naturalist, who had but one mistress—Selborne."

But though White remained a bachelor, he seems to have been a man of unusually affectionate disposition. His relations with the members of his family were of the most cordial nature; and one or another of his numerous nephews and nieces was generally on a visit to Selborne. Indeed, he appears to have been seldom alone. Nephews "Jack," or Sam Barker, to whom he writes many letters on natural history, come to stay with him, or "Niece Molly," for whom he has a special affection. One winter "brother and sister John" live with him; and after "brother John's" death the widow came to Selborne and resided with her brother-in-law during the rest of his life. When "Nephew Jack" marries, he sets off with his bride for Selborne immediately after the ceremony. Gilbert is much pleased with his new relation: "she is a nice needlewoman," he says, "and also a proficient in music, and can shoulder a violin, and in her carriage much of a gentlewoman." Other friends too occasionally visit our naturalist. John Mulso and his wife, "a very inactive lady," sometimes braved the journey from Meonstoke, some sixteen miles distant, and would stay a fortnight. Or Dr. Richard Chandler, the celebrated Greek traveller, would come, and the two lovers of antiquity would examine together the ancient documents relative to Selborne Priory. Another intimate friend was the Rev. Ralph Churton, a Fellow of Brasenose, who seems to have usually spent Christmas at Selborne. White was also on terms of the closest friendship with his clerical neighbours at the Vicarage and at Newton Valence; and great was his distress when within eleven months both Mr. Etty and Mr. Yalden died.

Though College livings now and again fell to his

share, White could never reconcile himself to the thought of leaving Selborne. Once, indeed, when the provostship of Oriel was vacant, he became a candidate for the post, but failed to be elected. After this disappointment he seems to have finally decided to remain at Selborne; though, as his friend Mulso's letters reveal, there was occasionally a flutter of excitement when some valuable piece of College preferment fell vacant. However, at Selborne he remained, retaining his Fellowship and also the College living of Moreton Pinkney, in Northamptonshire, which, after the manner of the age, was served by a curate; while White himself took clerical duty in the vicinity of his own home, first in the neighbouring village of Farringdon, which he served for twenty-five years, and afterwards in his own parish of Selborne. The routine of duty was regularly varied by visits to his relatives in Sussex, Rutlandshire, and London, and by his annual visit to Oxford. These journeys were mostly undertaken on horseback—his friend Mulso calls him a "hussar-parson"—as it appears White suffered much from what was called "stage-coach sickness."

Many are the details of domestic economy that we gather from the naturalist's letters, especially from those to his "dear niece Molly," only daughter of brother Thomas, of South Lambeth. He is constantly asking her to do little commissions for him in London —a pound of coffee, half-a-pound of soft sealing-wax, two or three quires of small writing-paper, or a "pound of Mr. Todd's 14s. green tea." Or he asks her to purchase him "a good large ham," and to send it down by coach. The journey to Selborne was not always accomplished without danger. "My ham," writes Gilbert White, "came safe, but had a great escape;

for in its passage down the waggon was robbed of about £30 in value." Again and again he writes to Molly for "half a hundred of good salt fish," or "five good Iceland codfishes," to be sent down by carrier. On one occasion a great calamity occurred. "We thank you," he writes, "for the salt fish, which proves more white and delicate than usual. Instead of in a parcel, the cod came down in a barrel, which, being leaky, let the brine out on the kitchen floor. I therefore told Thomas he should carry it into the cellar. Thomas, without much thought, took the barrel by the hoops and got to the cellar stairs, when off came the hoops, down fell the barrel, out flew the head; in short, the stairs from top to bottom became one broken, wet scene of barrel-staves and codfish." Other household matters sometimes occupy the attention of our naturalist. He is busy making catchup from the mushrooms gathered in the park below the Hanger; or he is superintending the brewing of his strong beer, or "bottling out some very fine raisin wine," or "half an hogshead of Mrs. Atherley's port," which had, he notices, "not quite so good a smell and flavour as usual, and seemed always to show a disposition to mantle in the glass." His garden is a source of constant pleasure and attention to him. He writes to Molly about his cucumbers, asparagus, the prospect of his wall-fruit, or the fine show his tulips are making. We catch a glimpse of Goody Hampton, "the weeding-woman," whose services White proposes to retain for the summer, "that the garden may be neat and tidy" when Molly comes. "This is the person," he adds, "that Thomas says he likes as well as a man; and, indeed, excepting that she wears petticoats, you would think her a man!" Various improvements

are from time to time carried out on the premises. He is engaged in making the Ha-ha wall, "built of blue rags," in the garden, which may still be seen; or in erecting his sundial, the column of which, he notes, is "very old, and came from Sarson House, near Amport, and was hewn from the quarries of Chilmarke." The building of the "great parlour" engaged his attention one summer, and seems to have been a great event in the monotonous life of our naturalist.

It has often been regretted that no portrait of Gilbert White exists. Though urged by "brother Thomas" to sit for his likeness, it does not appear that any picture was ever made of him. He is said by his biographer to have been only five feet three inches in stature and slender in person, but at the same time to have possessed a very upright carriage and a presence not without dignity. It is also stated that he was kind and courteous in manner, and liberal to his poorer neighbours; while he is said to have been specially devoted to the attention of his sick parishioners. This last particular is fully borne out by the numberless allusions in his letters to the sick and aged folk under his care at Selborne. His own health appears to have been generally good, though now and again we hear of attacks of sickness, and for many years before his death he was troubled with deafness, which rendered conversation irksome, and which apparently caused him to resort to an ear-trumpet, one being found among his effects at his decease. In one of his letters we find him alluding to an infirmity which we should hardly have associated with the writer of the *Naturalist's Journal*. "You, in your mild way," he writes to Robert Marsham, "complain a little of procrastination;

but I, who have suffered all my life long by that evil power, call her the Dæmon of Procrastination; and wish that Fuseli, the grotesque painter in London, who excells in drawing witches, dæmons, incubus's, and incantations, was employed in delineating this ugly hag, which fascinates in some measure the most determined and resolute of men."

In White's letters to members of his family we occasionally get glimpses of village life as it appeared in the old-world days of the eighteenth century. There were no good roads to Selborne, and during the winter months the village was almost inaccessible except on foot or horseback. Under date of March 15, 1756, it is noted in *The Garden Kalendar* as an event worth chronicling: "Brought a four-wheel'd post-chaise to ye door at this early time of year." John Mulso, when he visited his friend at Selborne, regularly asked for a guide to meet him "at the cross-roads," remarking that the village was as difficult of access as Rosamond's Bower. One winter a little diversion was created by the quartering in the village of the "26 High-landers." "These sans-breeches men," says White, "made an odd appearance in the village, where, though they had nothing in the world to do, have yet behaved in a very quiet and inoffensive manner, and were never known to steal even a turnip or a cabbage, though they lived much on vegetables, and were astonished at the 'dearness of Southern provisions.'" The honesty of the soldiers seems to have been the more notable in contrast with the doings of some of the Selborne labourers. It appears from one of White's letters to Molly, that, in consequence of a bad harvest, "the poor took to stealing the farmers' corn by night; the losers offered rewards, but in vain." The poor

people were beyond question very badly off: a few of the labourers, it appears from the "letters," kept pigs, and in years when beech-mast was abundant did fairly well; but, generally speaking, great poverty prevailed. They tried, many of them, to make a few shillings by keeping bees. "This day," notes Gilbert White, "has been at Selborne the honey-market: for a person from Chert came over with a cart, to whom all the villagers round brought their hives, and sold their contents. Combs were sold last year at about 3¾d. per pound; this year 3¾d.–4d." In addition to the general poverty there was little enough to break the monotony of daily life. Once, indeed, we read of a cricket-match, in which "Mr. Woods had his knee-pan dislocated by the stroke of a ball; and at the same time Mr. Webb was knocked down and his face and leg much wounded by the stroke of a ball." Or a mad dog from "Newton great farm" causes intense alarm by biting half the dogs in the street and many about the neighbourhood. In consequence of this "17 persons from Newton farm went in a waggon to be dipped in the sea, and also an horse." Or a strange wedding sets all the village for two days in an uproar, when "a young, mad-headed farmer out of Berks came to marry farmer Bridger's daughter, and brought with him four drunken companions." But "the common people all agree that the bridegroom was the most of a gentleman of any man they ever saw." Whether the labourers were accustomed to attend their parish church in those days we cannot discover from White's letters, but they were not in the habit of going to chapel. "For more than a century past," writes our parson-naturalist in the year 1788, "there does not appear to have been one Papist in Selborne, or any Protestant dissenter of any denomina-

tion." And as there were no chapels, so neither was there any recognised school. "Selborne," he adds, "is not able to maintain a schoolmaster; here are only two or three dames, who pick up a small pittance by teaching little children to read, knit, and sew." It is interesting to know that after White's death it was proposed to build a village school as a memorial to the historian of Selborne. The scheme was never carried out, but a sketch lately found in the village of the proposed building forms a fitting frontispiece to the present volume.

THE USE OF SIMPLES

In the language of the old herbalists, a "simple" was the general term for any herb or plant which was supposed to possess medicinal properties. According to the curious belief of the time, every plant in the Materia medica was held to contain its own particular virtue, and therefore to constitute a "simple" remedy. Hence herbs were simples; and in the botanical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an expedition in search of plants was frequently termed a "simpling-voyage" or a "simpling-journey," while an apothecary skilled in the knowledge of herbs is designated by Gerarde "a learned and diligent searcher of simples."

The term has now become obsolete, but it may serve to remind us of a curious branch of learning which was once identified with the practice of medicine. In ancient times "whatever was scientific in the art of medicine was centred in the study of herbs, and the materials of the healing art were wholly vegetable." The mineral and chemical remedies are of comparatively modern introduction, and date mainly from the Arabic physicians of the Middle Ages. This priority of herbal medicines, as Professor Earle has pointed out, has left its trace in the vocabulary of our language. The term *drug*, he tells us, "is from the Anglo-Saxon *drigan*, to dry; and drugs were at first dried herbs.

Thus the study of plants was identified with medicine by inveterate tradition; and when, in the sixteenth century, with the beginnings of modern botany, the chief cities of Europe established gardens for study, they were called Physic Gardens."

The first of these public physic gardens appears to have been founded at Padua in the year 1533; this was quickly followed by similar institutions at Zurich, at Bologna, and at Cologne. In England Dr. William Turner, "the Father of British botany," had a physic garden at his Deanery at Wells and another at Kew, while he also seems to have had the direction of the Duke of Somerset's garden at Sion House. Dear old Gerarde, whose quaint and curious *Herbal* is the delight alike of the botanist and of the lover of English literature, had a fine physic garden at Holborn, where he cultivated "near eleven hundred sorts of plants of foreign and domestic growth." Physic gardens were also established at Oxford and Edinburgh; and in the year 1673, owing in a great measure to the influence and liberality of Sir Hans Sloane, the friend of Ray, the famous garden at Chelsea was founded by the Company of Apothecaries.

These physic gardens were of great utility in promoting the study of botany and of medicine throughout Europe. But as the knowledge of science increased, the gulf between the vocation of the physician and of the herbalist grew wider. "It was a severance," says Professor Earle, in his interesting introduction to *English Plant Names*, "of the popular from the scientific; and it went on widening as botany grew stronger and more conscious of its vocation, while the herbal sank ever lower in cant and charlatanry. These

qualities early manifested themselves in connection with herbals. Even in old Gerarde, favourite and almost classic as he is, there is a spice of the mountebank. It is not that his book is tinged with popular error—all the books of the time are that—but his book leans to the side of superstition. Its motto might be the lines of Spenser in the *Faerie Queene:*

"O who can tell
The hidden powre of herbes and might of Magick spell?"

Ignored by the faculty, the herbal became the guide of the quack; and in *Culpepper's famous Herbal* it had become a fit companion for the *Astrological Almanack*."

As an illustration of the ignorance and superstition associated with the use of simples, the belief in the Doctrine of Signatures may be taken. This belief is quaintly expressed by the old herbalist, William Coles, in his scarce work on the *Art of Simpling*, published in 1656: "Though Sin and Sathan have plunged mankinde into an Ocean of Infirmities, yet the mercy of God which is over all his workes, maketh Grasse to grow upon the Mountaines, and Herbes for the use of Men, and hath not only stamped upon them a distinct forme, but also given them particular Signatures, whereby a man may read, even in legible characters, the use of them."

Thus, to take two or three examples, the spotted leaves of the Jerusalem cowslip, a plant common in cottage gardens, and known in the New Forest as "Joseph and Mary," indicate its value in cases of tuberculous lungs, and its former use for this purpose has given it the name of lungwort. In like manner the knotty tubers of the *Scrophularia* or figwort,

frequently found by the side of streams, are the sign or signature that the plant is a sovereign remedy for scrofulous or knotty glands; and the hard seeds or stony nutlets of the *Lithospermum*, or gromwell, proclaim it to be efficacious in cases of calculus or gravel. The scaly pappus of the common scabious again is the indication stamped upon it by God that the plant is valuable for leprous diseases; and the red hue of the stem and leaves of herb Robert (*Geranium Robertianum*, L.), so abundant in our hedgerows, is a certain sign that the plant is powerful as a "stancher of blood." In many of our Hampshire woods the elegant plant known as Solomon's seal is found. If the rootstock be cut transversely across, some marks like unto a seal will be noticed. This was sufficient to show the old herbalists that the plant was specially created for the express purpose of "sealing" or healing wounds. "The root of Solomon's seal," says Gerarde, "taketh away in one night, or two at the most, any bruise, black or blue spots, gotten by falls, or women's wilfulness in stumbling upon their hasty husbands' fists."

In spite, however, of the quackery which was inseparably bound up with the profession of the herbalist, there can be no doubt that a belief in the virtue of simples was very general among all classes in the olden times. There is a curious passage in George Herbert's *Country Parson*, in which the saintly poet of Bemerton insists on a "knowledge of simples" as part of the necessary equipment of a parish priest. The parson, except in "ticklish cases," is to be the physician of his flock. He is to keep by him "one book of physic, one anatomy, and one herbal." He is to make the vicarage garden his shop, "for home-

JOHN GERARDE
b. 1545 : d. 1607

bred medicines are both more easy for the parson's purse, and more familiar for all men's bodies. So, when the apothecary useth either for loosing, rhubarb, or for binding, bolearmena, the parson," says Herbert, "useth damask or white roses for the one, and plaintain, shepherd's purse, knotgrass for the other, and that with better success." So for salves, the parson's wife—for the wife, says Herbert, is to be chosen, not for her "qualities of the world," but for her "skill in healing a wound"—"seeks not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums. And surely hyssop, valerian, mercury, adder's tongue, yarrow, meliot, and St. John's-wort, made into a salve, and elder, camomile, mallows, comphrey, and smallage, made into a poultice, have done great and rare cures. And in curing of any the parson and his family use to premise prayers, for this is to cure like a parson, and this raiseth the action from the shop to the church."

And doubtless there was a certain virtue in many of these old-world remedies. The use of them would hardly have been continued had their efficacy been found altogether wanting. And certain it is that many of these herbal preparations were regarded with favour even by scientific men. John Ray was the greatest naturalist of his age, and may be fairly said in his *Methodus Plantarum* to have laid the foundation of modern scientific botany, yet he not only believed in the virtue of plants, but even used herbal remedies for his own ailments. Towards the end of his life Ray suffered severely from some scrofulous complaint, and was greatly troubled with ulcers on the legs. For this we find him using a "decoction of elecampane, dockroot, and chalk, in whey, and bathing the affected

parts therewith"; while, instead of physic, he is taking a "plain diet drink, made of dockroot, watercress, brooklime, plaintain, and alder leaves, boiled in wort." For a time, he tells Sir Hans Sloane, he received some benefit from this treatment, till "the winter coming on, and little virtue in the herbs," he was forced to give it over.

In Gilbert White's *History of Selborne* we learn, unfortunately, very little about the use of simples. He recommends, indeed, that the botanist should direct his attention to the examination of "the powers and virtues of efficacious herbs," and should endeavour to "promote their cultivation"; but he has little to tell us about the actual use of them. The only instance he gives is with reference to *Helleborus fœtidus*, the stinking hellebore, or setterwort, to which we have already alluded.

But the belief in the efficacy of simples has almost entirely disappeared. The last of the old race of herb-doctors is gone. One of the last, Dr. Prior tells us, was living at Market Lavington, in Wiltshire, at the close of the eighteenth century. His name was Dr. Batter. He had been brought up very humbly, and "lived and dressed as a poor man in a cottage by the roadside, where he was born and where his father and grandfather had lived before him, and been famous in their day as bone-setters. There, if the weather permitted, he would bring out his chair and table, and seat his numerous patients on the hedgebank, and prescribe for them out-of-doors. It is said that, being well acquainted with every part of the county, he would usually add to the names of the plants that he ordered, the localities near the home of his visitor where they would most readily be found." Still,

though the genuine old-fashioned race of herbalists has died out, yet here and there in remote country districts there is a lingering belief in the efficacy of "harbs." Richard Jefferies relates that once he met a labourer who was deeply depressed because of the death of a son. The poor fellow had had every attention, but still he regretted one thing. There was a herb, which grew in wet places and was known only to a few, that was a certain cure for the kind of wasting disease which had baffled the skill of the doctor. There was an old man, said the rustic, living somewhere by a river, fifty miles away, who possessed the secret of this herb and by it had accomplished marvellous cures. He had heard of him, but could not by any inquiry find out his exact whereabouts; and so his son died. Everything possible had been done, but still he regretted that the herb had not been applied.

Some years ago there lived in a former parish of the writer's a very old woman who in her younger days had gained a livelihood by selling flowers in a neighbouring town. Sometimes, too, at the right season she would tramp the country for miles around after watercresses and herbs. With regard to the herbs it was difficult to get much information. The old lady was very reticent on the subject. The names of the herbs she would never mention, but she took them, she said, to a shop at Portsmouth to a man "she knowed." One day, when the old lady was ill, she was in a more communicative mood. A strange thing happened once; she hardly liked to speak of it, but it was true. She had been out all day in Bere Forest after "harbs"—twenty miles she had been after 'em—when coming home in the evening, not far

from the "monument," near the top of the hill, all of a sudden a man she had never seen before stood before her—a sharp-featured man he was, in dark clothes—and said, "I'll give you a sovereign for them harbs." "'A sovereign?' says I. 'Yes,' he says, 'a sovereign,' and without another word he puts a piece of money in my hand, takes the harbs, and was gone. I stood there, tremblin' from head to foot, I did, I was that frightened; it were a sovereign right enough—there was no mistake about that—but who the man might be, and where he had got to—that's what frightened me. I kept that sovereign, for years I kept it; *I didn't dare spend it.*" "But, Liza," I ventured to ask, "did you never see the man again?" "Ever see 'im again? Yes," she said, "I seed 'im once again, years afterwards it was, but I know'd 'im; you couldn't mistake them sharp features, and them clothes. I was comin' along the road, past Wickham Wood, when there, not twenty yards ahead of me, he stood; but almost afore I seed 'im he was gone. No, *I didn't dare spend that sovereign.*" When Liza died more than six hundred gold pieces were found in two leather bags concealed in her mattress. She had done well with her flowers and her "harbs." But she was the last of the simple-gatherers of Hampshire. It is seldom now that you meet with a cottager who knows even by sight the plants which once constituted the village remedies. They still grow in their old localities, in the meadows and the hedgerows and the woods—a few even linger in the cottage gardens; but no one comes to gather them. It is not that the labourers have ceased to believe in infallible remedies; but now they send on market days to the chemist's shop in the town for the quack medicines advertised in the local

papers, and in which they believe as firmly as their forefathers believed in simples. Times have changed. The hellebore still flourishes on Selborne Hill, but the good women no longer gather it, and do not so much as know of its existence.

Not so very long ago a decoction of the greater celandine, a plant allied to the poppies, and having a gamboge-coloured juice, was commonly used in the Isle of Wight as a remedy for infantine jaundice. The plant may still be seen in considerable plenty between Yarmouth and Freshwater, not far from the spot where the wild asparagus grows, but the country folk pass it by. Among the ruins and in the neighbourhood of ancient priories plants may often be found which once flourished in the monastic herb-gardens. The *Aristolochia*, or birthwort, formerly held to possess great medicinal virtue, may perhaps still be seen on the venerable walls of St. Cross at Winchester. In the woods near Quarr Abbey, in the Isle of Wight, the lungwort is abundant every spring; it may also be found in the neighbourhood of Beaulieu Abbey in the New Forest. Another medicinal plant still to be found among the picturesque ruins of the great Cistercian Abbey is the hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*). This plant is probably the hyssop of Scripture, and was much valued for its healing properties. Gerarde grew it in his garden at Holborn, and Spenser spoke of it as "Sharp Isope, good for green wounds' remedies."

The ancient use of hyssop as a simple is indicated by its specific name *officinalis*. This term, as used in our British flora, always signifies that the plant so named had a recognised place in the Materia medica. From twenty to thirty of our British plants carry this specific title, and in every instance the term recalls to

mind their former use. We have already noticed several of these medicinal plants, the lungwort, the gromwell, the Solomon's seal. Among others may be mentioned such well-known herbs as fennel, and borage, and comfrey, and calamint, and barm. The anti-scorbutic properties of watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and scurvy grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*) are generally admitted, though since the discovery of lime-juice they are seldom used medicinally. The root of the dandelion still yields a well-known medicine. The use of vervain (*Verbena officinalis*), a plant often found in churchyards and waste places, dates back to very remote times. It was one of the four sacred plants of the Druids, who attributed to it virtues almost divine. It was supposed to "vanquish fevers and other distempers, to be an antidote to the bite of serpents, and a charm to cultivate friendship." But of all plants used as simples, none perhaps had a greater repute among our forefathers than *Euphrasia officinalis*, or eyebright. Its praises were sung by Spenser and Milton and Thomson. Its efficacy was such that, according to the old herbalist, "if the herb were as much used as it is neglected, it would half spoil the spectacle-maker's trade;" and he adds: "A man would think that reason should teach people to prefer the preservation of their natural sight before artificial spectacles." The belief in the efficacy of eyebright has hardly died out yet. Anne Pratt tells us that, going into a small shop at Dover, she saw a quantity of the plant suspended from the ceiling, and was informed that it was gathered and dried as being an excellent remedy for bad eyes. Still in rural districts persons are met with who have "heard tell"

that the plant is good for weak eyes; just as now and then, though very rarely, a cottager may be seen gathering nettles and dandelions for the purpose of making tea. This occasional use of "harb-tay" seems to be the last vestige of a belief in simples which was once universal among our forefathers.

POT-HERBS

THERE is an interesting passage in one of Gilbert White's letters, in which, speaking of the disappearance of the leprosy in England, he attributes it in a great measure to the increased use of vegetables. "As to the product of a garden," he says, writing in 1778, "every middle-aged person of observation may perceive, within his own memory, both in town and country, how vastly the consumption of vegetables is increased. Green-stalls in cities now support multitudes in a comfortable state, while gardeners get fortunes. Every decent labourer has his garden, which is half his support, as well as his delight. Potatoes have prevailed in this little district, by means of premiums, within these twenty years only, and are much esteemed by the poor, who would scarce have ventured to taste them in the last reign."

In these days, when potatoes form a not inconsiderable part of a working man's dinner, and when every farm labourer has his garden, or piece of allotment-ground, it is difficult to realise the state of things when potatoes were unknown and vegetables were luxuries. Although, as Lord Bacon reminds us, "God Almightie first planted a garden," yet it is evident that in this country the cultivation of vegetables has only become general in comparatively modern times. Our Saxon forefathers certainly had some sort of

cabbage, for they called the month of February *Sprout-cale*, but, as White observes, "long after their days the cultivation of vegetables was little attended to." In the Middle Ages most of the monasteries and religious houses had their herb-gardens, where they cultivated "simples" for the sake of the sick, and doubtless "pot-herbs" for the use of the brethren, but to what extent it is difficult to determine. In the few monastic Diet-rolls that have been discovered while the consumption of mushrooms, both in summer and winter, is shown to have been enormous, there is an almost entire silence with regard to vegetables. It is possible, however, that the convent garden being under the care of the *hortulanus*, or gardener, this item might have appeared in a separate roll. With the revival of botanical learning in the sixteenth century, when physic gardens were established, not only at the Universities, but also by private personages, a great impetus was undoubtedly given to the cultivation of vegetables, and many new kinds were introduced into the country, yet the movement cannot be said to have touched the habits of the poorer people. Still, it would be a mistake to suppose that the labourers of the olden time were entirely destitute of green food. It seems to be beyond dispute that the use of certain wild plants as vegetables was general among our forefathers. A considerable number of our indigenous British plants are useful vegetables, and in days when large tracts of country were entirely uncultivated must have existed in large quantities; and these plants, known as "pot-herbs," took the place of garden-stuff in Mediæval England. We propose to consider in this paper some of these indigenous pot-herbs which may still be found in their native haunts, and which

once formed the vegetable supply of our population.

In its strict sense, as used by the early botanists, a pot-herb is a "herbe that serves for the potte," and of these we have a considerable number in our native flora. Among them may be mentioned the wild cabbage, sea-beet, and mercury. The use of the wild cabbage or sea colewort is hardly extinct yet. It is still gathered by the peasants on the sea cliffs of Devonshire in hard winters when garden produce is scarce. This plant is the origin of our garden varieties, such as savoys and brussels-sprouts and broccoli and cauliflower, and has been cultivated from very early times. The great naturalist, John Ray, noticed it growing wild on "Dover Cliffs," where it still flourishes in remarkable abundance. Indeed, in summer time the white chalk cliffs from Dover to St. Margaret's Bay are gay with the pale yellow blossoms of this plant. It may also be seen in considerable plenty on the picturesque cliffs which command the entrance to Dartmouth Harbour, in South Devon. In the Isle of Wight it was formerly abundant, especially on the Culver Cliffs between Bembridge and Sandown; but for some reason it has disappeared of late years. The sea-beet (*Beta maritima*, L.), sometimes called sea-spinach, the origin of our beetroot and mangold-wurtzel, is a common plant near the sea. It is mostly abundant in salt marshes, and on banks and waste places along the shore. Fifty years ago the young leaves were regularly gathered by the poorer classes in the Isle of Wight, and "boiled and eaten as greens with the pork or bacon which then formed so constant an article in the dietary of our Hampshire peasantry." Occasionally the plant is so

used now, and it certainly forms an excellent substitute for spinach.

In Lincolnshire, Good King Henry or All-good (*C. Bonus-Henricus*, L.), is still cultivated as a pot-herb, and in former times was much used. The origin of the name "Good King Henry" is unknown, but, says Dr. Prior, "it has nothing to do with our Henry VIII. and his sore legs." From its general habit and appearance the plant is called "wild spinach" in the Isle of Wight, where it may often be met with in waste places and by roadsides. In other districts it is known as "mercury," but the true mercury is *Mercurialis annua*, a plant not infrequently met with as a weed in gardens, and which is very abundant about Winchester. This plant was among the most famous of the ancient pot-herbs. Dr. Turner, in his black-letter herbal, published at Cologne in 1568, gives two excellent woodcuts of the plant, and after a description of its parts, goes on to say: "By thys description it is playn that our forefathers have erred in England which hitherto in the most parte of all England have used another herbe in the stede of the ryghte mercury. Therefore as many as had leuer ete whete than acornes, let them use no more theyr old mercury, but thys mercury (*M. annua*) whych Dioscorides describeth. The ryght mercury groweth comon in the fields and wynyardes of Germany without any settyng or sowyng. And it beginneth now to be knowen in London, and in gentle mennis places not far from London. I neuer saw it grow more plenteously in all my lyfe than about Wormes in Germany." The plant used by our forefathers "in the stede of the ryghte mercury" was doubtless the "Good King Henry" referred to above, and which is often called by old writers "English

mercury"; while from Turner's description it would appear that the "ryghte mercury," also known as "French mercury," was at that time usually seen only in gardens in England. This is partly confirmed by Gerarde, who says: "French mercury is sowen in kitchen gardens among pot-herbs. I found it under the dropping of the Bishop's house at Rochester; from whence I brought a plant or two into my garden, since which time I cannot rid my garden from it." Ray, on the other hand, who also calls the plant "French mercury," speaks of it as growing "plentifully on the sea beach near Ryde, in the Isle of Wight." It is curious how a plant once held in such repute as a pot-herb should have passed so entirely out of use; and its virtue as a "simple" was only equalled by its excellence as a vegetable; hence the old proverb—

> "Be thou sick or whole,
> Put mercury in thy koole."

Among other plants once in general use as pot-herbs may be mentioned sorrel, scurvy-grass, and the common nettle; while the young shoots of the common hop are still regarded, and not without reason, as an excellent substitute for asparagus.

Asparagus has been cultivated as a vegetable since the time of the Romans. In its wild state it is still found on the coasts of Wales and Cornwall, and in the Channel Islands. It is interesting to notice that in 1667 John Ray found "sparrow-grass" at the Lizard Point; and he adds: "said also to be found in the marshes near Bristol, about Harwich in Essex, and divers other places." Gerarde met with it "in a meadow adjoining a mill beyond a village called Thorpe"; "likewise," he adds, "it groweth in great

plenty near unto Harwich, at a place called Bandamar lading." The writer knows of one spot in the Isle of Wight where, among the loose sand of the sea-shore, the plant has existed for a great number of years, but perhaps it can hardly be considered as indigenous.

Another plant in great repute as a vegetable, and which may be found in a wild state at various stations on the English coast, is the seakale—*Crambe maritima*. This plant has only been cultivated as a vegetable for a little over a century, though it appears to have been used in its wild state for a longer period. It abounds on the sandy shore by Calshot Castle, near the entrance to Southampton Water, where, for a great number of years, the fishermen have been accustomed to blanch the young shoots by covering them with sand and shingle, and afterwards to send them to Cowes or Southampton for sale. To William Curtis, the author of the *Flora Londinensis*, belongs the credit of bringing seakale into general use as a vegetable. Towards the end of the eighteenth century he made a considerable plantation of it in his botanical garden at Brompton. At first the experiment met with little encouragement, and the first consignment was returned from Covent Garden unsold. Curtis, however, persevered; he wrote a pamphlet on the culture of seakale, and presented a packet of seed with each copy, and thus he at length succeeded in bringing the new vegetable into notice. It is said, and doubtless with some truth, that the wild plant, blanched with sand on its native shore, is superior in delicacy of flavour to the cultivated vegetable.

In his tour of Europe, undertaken in the year 1663, John Ray observes that "The Italians use several herbs for sallets which are not yet or have

not been but lately used in England, viz. *selleri*, which is nothing else but the sweet smallage; the young shoots whereof, with a little of the head of the root cut off, they eat raw with oil and pepper." By the "sweet smallage" Ray doubtless meant *Apium graveolens*, or wild celery, a plant not uncommon in wet places, especially near the sea, and which is undoubtedly the origin of our garden celery. At that time, however, the root of *Smyrnium Olusatrum*, the common alexanders, seems to have been used in the place of celery, for Gerarde says, "the roote hereof is in our age served to the table raw for a sallade herbe." This plant is one of the most ancient of vegetables. From the time of Dioscorides it has been in use as a pot-herb (as its specific name signifies), "boiled and eaten like greens," besides being "served raw as a sallade herbe." Its ancient use is now entirely abandoned and its very name forgotten, the plant being mostly confounded with the "wild celery," by which name it is known in the Isle of Wight. It is not, however, an uncommon plant, especially in the neighbourhood of monastic ruins, where it is doubtless an outcast from the old convent garden. The writer has noticed it, among other localities, in the "old churchyard" at Dunwich on the coast of Suffolk; among the ruins of Portchester Castle where there was once a priory of Austin Canons; beside the crumbling remains of Southwick Priory; at Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight; and in a copse near the picturesque ruins of Quarr Abbey.

The water-cress, so abundant in our streams, and now so extensively cultivated for the market, has been known for ages as an early and wholesome spring salad, and among other native plants once used as

"sallet-herbes" may be mentioned lamb's-lettuce or corn-salad, a small annual with pale lilac flowers, often found in cornfields; the common dandelion, the young leaves of which are excellent in spring; and *Barbarea præcox*, or winter-cress, a plant supposed to have been introduced from America. It is frequent in the Isle of Wight, where it is known as land-cress, in contra-distinction to water-cress.

Not so many years ago the gathering of samphire for purposes of pickling was a regular occupation on various parts of the coast. This trade is a very ancient one, and is alluded to by Shakespeare in *King Lear*:—

> "Half way down,
> Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
> Methinks he seems no bigger than his head."

This plant still grows abundantly on the white chalk cliff known as Shakespeare's Cliff at Dover, though the "dreadful trade" has ceased. Fifty years ago, however, it was regularly followed in the Isle of Wight. "The warm, aromatic pickle prepared with this plant," wrote the author of *Flora Vectensis*, about the year 1848, "is greatly esteemed and commonly seen at table in this island. The herb, minced, is also served up with melted butter in lieu of caper-sauce. For the purpose of pickling it is annually collected in large quantities from the cliffs at Freshwater, and sent up to some wholesale houses in London by the cliffsmen, who make samphire gathering a part of their summer occupation, and for which, when cleaned and sorted, they receive 4s. per bushel. It is put up in casks with sea water, for its better preservation on the journey, and probably also to extract any bitterness

it may contain. For smaller quantities the charge for collecting is 1s. per gallon. The samphire is considered in perfection when just about to flower, or towards the end of May." The gathering of samphire on the precipitous chalk cliffs being a very difficult and dangerous occupation, it is not surprising to learn that some little fraud was occasionally practised by the fishermen in substituting other plants of a similar appearance for the true article. For this purpose the sea-aster, marsh-samphire, and golden-samphire were usually employed, but they are said to form for "medicinal and culinary purposes" a very poor substitute.

Another native plant, once extensively used in the manufacture of food, is the well-known *Arum maculatum*, "Cuckoo-pint" or "Lords-and-ladies." It was from the corms of this plant that the famous Portland arrowroot or Portland sago was made. The mode of manufacture is said to have been as follows: "The corms, which are dug up in June, are well washed, then bruised, and well stirred in a vessel of water. The coarser particles are then strained off, and the fecula, after repeated subsidence and washings, is finally dried in the sun, and the result is a starch well known as being one of the smaller varieties, yielding a jelly which, although inferior to Bermuda, is superior or equal to ordinary arrowroots." The manufacture of arrowroot in the Isle of Portland was continued up to the year 1855, or a little later, after which time it seems to have entirely ceased. A writer in *The Phytologist* for November 1858, attributes the cessation of this trade to improved methods of agriculture. Formerly, it appears, the fields were only cropped once in two years, being left fallow the

remainder of the term, and were crowded with the Bee Orchis and *Arum maculatum*. But, says our writer, Mr. Henry Groves, "the rotation of crops, which has at length been adopted in the island, has almost destroyed this branch of industry, so that instead of being able to procure some pounds of arrowroot, one can scarcely get as many ounces at the present time. There are only one or two persons who make it, and the aggregate quantity is so small that we were unable to obtain any for oneself in 1857." In spite, however, of modern agriculture, the *Arum* continues to flourish in the Isle of Portland, and may still be found, writes a correspondent, "by the thousand."

In conclusion, it may be noted that many of our garden herbs, still in common use for purposes of seasoning, are in reality British plants. Among them may be mentioned mint and marjoram, and thyme and calamint, all of which may be found in their native haunts. Fennel is abundant on seacliffs in many places in the south of England. Wild balm used to be found within the ancient walls of Portchester Castle. The garden parsley was formerly abundant on the shingly beach at Hurst Castle, where it used to be gathered for domestic purposes. One native herb, however, much in use among our forefathers, is now seldom seen in kitchen gardens—we mean *Tanacetum vulgare*, the common tansy, the dull yellow flowers of which are often conspicuous in waste places. The young leaves and juice of this plant were formerly employed to give colour and flavour to puddings, which were known as tansy cakes, or tansy puddings. In mediæval times the use of these cakes was specially associated with the season of

Easter; and it is interesting to notice that in the Diet-rolls of St. Swithun's Monastery at Winchester, which belong to the end of the fifteenth century, we come across the entry "tansey-tarte." It has been said that the use of tansy cakes at this season was to strengthen the digestion after what an old writer calls "the idle conceit of eating fish and pulse for forty days in Lent"; and it is certain that this was the virtue attributed to the plant by the old herbalists. "The herb fried with eggs, which is called a Tansy," says Culpeper, "helps to digest and carry away those bad humours that trouble the stomach." It seems, however, more probable that the custom of eating tansy-cakes at Easter-time was rather associated with the teaching of that festival, the name "tansy" being a corruption of a Greek word meaning "immortality."

WILD FRUITS

In the olden times, when the conditions of life were far more simple than they are now, the use made of wild plants, as has been already noticed, was considerably greater. In days when cottage gardens and allotment grounds were almost unknown, our forefathers were accustomed to gather pot-herbs for use as vegetables. The leaves of mercury, good-King-Henry, and of the wild beetroot were boiled as spinach; and the roots of *Smyrnium olusatrum*, or alexanders, were used as celery. The wild seakale was bleached with sand or shingle on the seashore, and the wild cabbage was gathered on the cliffs. In the place of lettuce, watercress from the running brook was extensively used, together with corn-salad and the leaves of dandelion. Before the days of parish doctors and of quack medicines, now so widely advertised and so largely purchased by our poorer people, the knowledge of "simples" was very considerable among the good women in country places. In every village some one skilled in the use of herbs was sure to be found ready and able to minister to the sick. The gathering of simples was a recognised branch of industry in those primitive times. Agrimony, and eyebright, and scurvy-grass, and lungwort, and Solomon's-seal, and many another native plant, was then duly gathered and prepared against the time of need. The virtue

of many of these herbs seems to be beyond question, but they are never used now. They may still be found, by those learned in the ways of plants, growing in our copses and hedgerows, or along the banks of streams, but their very names are forgotten by the country people.

In our native flora there are a goodly number of "trees yielding fruit," which in former years were highly prized among our forefathers. The use of these wild fruits is not now so general as it used to be; in many instances it is altogether obsolete, but the subject is one full of interest to all lovers of country life.

In Saxon and mediæval times, even after the introduction of wheat and other cereals, there can be little doubt that acorns were regularly used by the poorer peasants for the purposes of making bread, and not only in seasons of scarcity, but as a general article of food. Oak trees were then chiefly valued because of the acorns which they produced. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1116, which is described as "a very calamitous year, the crops being spoiled by the heavy rains, which came on just before August and lasted till Candlemas," it is expressly recorded as an aggravation of the "heavy time" that "mast was also so scarce this year that none was to be heard of in all this land or in Wales." The days of mast-bread are happily gone for ever; and even barley-bread, in common use during severe winters not so many years ago, has now everywhere given place to that of "the finest wheat flour." The fruit of one member of the same order is, however, highly valued. We refer, of course, to the hazel, so abundant in our woods and hedgerows. To go a-nutting is still as popular a

pastime as in former years; but the old customs in connection with it are as obsolete as the use of acorn bread. No one will now be found, with the good Vicar of Wakefield and his honest neighbours, to "religiously crack nuts on Michaelmas eve."

It is to the order *Rosaceæ* that most of our wild fruits belong. In this large and important tribe are included such well-known examples as plums, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, apples, and pears, all of which may be found in a wild state in Britain. Plums are represented in our native flora by three species, or sub-species—the common sloe or blackthorn, the bullace, and the wild plum. The latter can hardly perhaps be pronounced with certainty to be indigenous, though it is often found in apparently wild situations, but of the other two species there can be no question. The sloe-bush or blackthorn is very common in our thickets and hedgerows, and the fruit is still gathered for the purpose of making sloe-gin. Old Nicholas Culpeper says, and truly, that "the fruit ripens after all other plums whatsoever, and is not fit to be eaten until the autumn frost mellow them." The bullace, though less common than the last, is still plentiful in many districts, as, for instance, in the Isle of Wight, where it was formerly gathered by the country people, and taken into market for sale for the purpose of making tarts and puddings. "I once," wrote Dr. Bromfield of Ryde in the year 1848, "brought home a quart or more of these wild bullaces, and had them made into a tart, which was one of the best flavoured and most juicy I ever partook of."

A near relation of the bullace is the wild cherry-tree, or merry-tree, also known in certain districts as the "Gean." This handsome tree is the origin of the

Geans, Hearts, and Bigaroon cherries of our gardens, and is not uncommon in woods and copses in the south of England, where it may be considered indigenous. A dwarf variety of the "Gean," but thought by some botanists to be a distinct species, is *Prunus cerasus*, a bush with copious suckers, first discovered to be a British plant by Dr. Bromfield in 1839, when he found it in "a wood between Whippingham Street and Wootton Church, but nearer to the former, and close to a place called Blankets, growing plentifully and apparently indigenous." This shrub is the parent stock of such well-known varieties as the Morello, Duke, and Kentish cherries.

Of all the *genera* in the British flora there is none so puzzling to the botanist, because of the vast number and uncertain character of its varieties, as the *rubus*, or bramble. To this family belong the well-known blackberry of our hedgerows, the raspberry, and the cloudberry. This latter is an Alpine species, growing only some six inches in height, and much prized in the north of England and in Scotland for its orange berries, which are eaten fresh or preserved. In Norway, we are told, the fruit is regularly gathered, packed in wooden vessels, and sent to Stockholm, where it is served in desserts or made into tarts. The plant is so abundant in Lapland that the celebrated traveller, Dr. Clarke, observes, "Whenever we walked near the river we found whole acres covered with these blushing berries (at first crimson, afterwards becoming yellow), hanging so thick that we could not avoid treading upon them." The dewberry is a well-known variety of the common bramble, marked by its creeping habit and the glaucous bloom which covers its fruit. The origin of the name is obscure, but Dr. Prior would

connect it in some manner with the "Theve-thorn," a word which occurs in Wycliffe's Bible, as the rendering of *rhamnus*, in the story of Jotham's parable of the Trees. It is not known what species of bramble Wycliffe meant by the "Theve-thorn"; but monkish commentators, doubtless following some ecclesiastical tradition, understood the *rhamnus* to be the dewberry.

The wild raspberry, the origin of our garden varieties, is common enough in woods, especially in the north of England. This plant is commonly called "hindberry" by the early botanists; and it is curious to notice that Gerarde remarks that the fruit is "in taste not very pleasant." Such, however, was not his opinion of the strawberry. As old Izaak Walton happily says, quoting one Dr. Boteler, "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did." And the strawberry of those days seems to have been only the wild strawberry of the woods, probably improved by cultivation. It flourished, as we know from Shakespeare, in the Bishop of Ely's garden at Holborn, which was equally celebrated for its roses and its saffron crocuses. "Wife," says Thomas Tusser, the homely farmer-poet of Suffolk, in the sixteenth century—

> "Wife, into thy garden, and set me a plot
> With Strawberry rootes of the best to be got:
> Such growing abroade, among Thornes in the wood,
> Wel chosen and picked, prove excellent good."

And even in the next century, as Mr. Ellacombe reminds us, Sir Hugh Plat, in his *Garden of Eden*, says: "Strawberries which grow in woods prosper best in gardens." And these wild strawberries, so abundant in shady places throughout England, and

as far north as the Shetland Isles, are doubtless the origin of the cultivated varieties.

In these days of advanced horticulture the fruit of the wild apple (*Pyrus malus*), and of the wild pear (*P. communis*), would hardly be regarded as "good for food"; but it is certain that in ancient times they were both largely used. In the lake-dwellings of Switzerland and Italy great quantities of wild apples and a few wild pears have been found. "The inhabitants of the *terra-mare* of Parma, and of the palafittes of the lakes of Lombardy, Savoy, and Switzerland," says De Candolle, "made great use of apples. They always cut them lengthways, and preserved them dried as a provision for the winter. The specimens are often carbonised by fire, but the internal structure of the fruit is only the more clearly to be distinguished." And from a scientific examination of these carbonised specimens it seems to be established that many of these ancient apples were almost identical with the wild apple of to-day. But even in the sixteenth century the crab-apple of our woods was held in far higher esteem than it is now. "Roasted crabs" served with hot ale was, as we learn from Shakespeare, a favourite dish among our forefathers, especially at Christmas time. Another use of the crab-apple was in the making of verjuice, of which mention is made by Izaak Walton in his *Compleat Angler:* "When next you come this way," says the honest milk-woman, "if you will but speak the word I will make you a good syllabub of new verjuce, and you shall sit down in a haycock and eat it." But we don't care for such rustic delicacies now.

Like the strawberry, the cultivation of currants and gooseberries was unknown among the Greeks and

Romans, and dates only from the sixteenth century. It has been a matter of dispute whether these shrubs should be considered as genuine natives of Great Britain; but, in the light of further research, this claim to be indigenous, at least in the north of England, will now hardly be denied. In the southern counties, though the species are now common enough in woods and thickets, it is possible that they may be escapes from cultivation. It is interesting to notice that John Ray speaks of black currants as "squinancy-berries," a name which shows that they were commonly used then, as now, in cases of sore-throat.

The fruit of the wild elder which, says old Culpeper, need not be described, "since every boy that plays with a pop-gun will not mistake another tree instead of elder," is still gathered by country people for the purpose of making elderberry wine, which is held to possess considerable medicinal virtue. "If," says John Evelyn, "the medicinal properties of the leaves, bark, and berries of this tree were thoroughly known, I cannot tell what our countrymen could ail for which they might not find a remedy from every hedge, either for sickness or wound." These so-called natural remedies are now seldom employed; it is therefore the more interesting to notice that elderberry wine is still frequently used by poor people in country places.

In former years the barberry seems to have been far commoner in our hedgerows than it is now. Ray mentions this handsome shrub as abundant in his day about Saffron Walden, in Essex, where it has now entirely disappeared. In Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, the district best known botanically to the writer, it is a very rare plant; and its present scarcity

is doubtless to be explained by the belief that its presence caused mildew in wheat. Hence the barberry was extirpated in many places, and has now become extremely scarce. It was formerly known as the Pipperidge-bush, that is, *red-pip*, a name descriptive of the colour and character of its berries, which were preserved in various ways. It is a curious fact that the juniper, so abundant on many of the chalk downs of Hampshire, as for instance about Petersfield, should be absent from the flora of the Isle of Wight. In former years juniper berries were far more commonly used than now, especially for the purpose of flavouring Hollands or gin. They were also generally employed in the curing of hams, but for this purpose they are now rarely sought after.

Several species of the order *Ericaceæ*, or Heath tribe, produce berries good for food. Of these the best known are the bilberry and the cranberry. The former, also known as whortleberries, are abundant in Scotland and the north of England, and in certain districts in the south, as about Hindhead, in Surrey. Gilbert White recorded the plant as found on "the dry hillocks of Wolmer Forest," where it still flourishes in great abundance. The berries, known locally as "whorts," make excellent tarts, for which purpose they are annually gathered by the gipsies and country people and sold in the neighbouring towns and villages. The cranberry, a near relative of the whortleberry, is found in peat bogs, and is a beautiful plant, with its bright red flowers and evergreen leaves, the margins of which are always rolled back, and its wiry stems creeping over the sphagnum moss. In the south of England the plant is rare, but the writer has found it "in the bogs of Bin's Pond," near Selborne, where

Gilbert White noticed it more than a hundred years ago. In the hilly districts of the north another member of the same tribe, known as cowberry, is also found, the berries of which resemble those of the cranberry for which they are sometimes sold.

In conclusion one more plant, belonging to the *Ericaceæ*, must be mentioned. This is the handsome evergreen shrub, *Arbutus unedo*, the strawberry tree, which grows abundantly in a wild state about the beautiful lakes of Killarney. The fruit, which resembles a strawberry in shape and colour, is occasionally eaten by the Irish peasantry. It is, however, very dry and of a somewhat insipid flavour. Indeed, it is this characteristic of the fruit which gave to the plant its specific name of *unedo*, "One I eat," as if to imply that having tasted one berry no man would care to try a second.

WALL-FLOWERS

It is curious how some plants love to grow upon old walls and ruins. Indeed, there are certain species of wild-flowers which are seldom found except in such situations. It may be truly said that our ancient churches and cathedrals, the ruins of mediæval castles and of monastic houses, the remains of old city walls, and such like picturesque localities, support a flora of their own.

The most conspicuous example of this interesting flora is the well-known wallflower of our gardens, which is never found in a wild state except upon walls or ruins. But the wall-gilliflower, as it used to be called, is not by any means the only plant which deserves the distinguishing name of *wall-flower*. There are many others, of which the snap-dragon, the yellow sedum, the wall pennywort, and the pretty little *Draba verna*, or whitlow-grass, will occur to all. In the west of England almost every wayside wall is green with vegetation. The most delicate ferns abound—the wall rue, the ceterach, the maidenhair spleenwort. Go where you will, you will see ferns and flowers growing from the interstices of the stones.

Several of our greatest British rarities belong to the wall-flora. The little *Holosteum umbellatum* used to grow on old walls at Eye, and Bury, and Norwich, and

other places in East Anglia. It is now, alas! almost, if not quite, extinct. The walls have been demolished, and the plant is gone. The yellow whitlow-grass (*Draba aizoides*) is only to be found on old walls at Pennard Castle, in Wales. The sweet-scented Nottingham catchfly is so called because it was first discovered by a friend of the famous naturalist John Ray growing on the walls of Nottingham Castle. Strange to say, after the burning of the castle in 1830 the plant for a few years completely overspread the ruins, establishing itself on the walls, in the crevices between the stones, and in every place where it was possible to obtain a footing. It is still there, though not nearly in such abundance. It was, however, fairly plentiful a few summers ago near the spot known as "Mortimer's Hole." On several old walls at Oxford a strange kind of yellow ragwort may be seen. Its proper home is in the south of Europe, but by some means or other it has found its way to Oxford, and evidently means to stay there.

In the county best known botanically to the writer many interesting species of our wall-flora may be seen. Hampshire possesses several fine ruins, and many hundred yards of ancient walls. There is Portchester Castle, and Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight. There are the ruins of the great Cistercian monasteries of Quarr, of Netley, and of Beaulieu in the New Forest. There are the remains of Titchfield Abbey and Southwick Priory; and ancient walls may be seen at Winchester, at Southampton, and elsewhere.

It may appear almost superfluous to mention the common ivy in connection with walls and ruins. It is so intimately associated with such places that "an

ivy-mantled tower" is regarded as a matter of course. Sometimes, however, the shrub assumes such huge proportions as to call for notice. At Portchester Castle, for instance, it covers the northern face of the Norman keep to the depth of some six or seven feet, and this in spite of the fact that the stems in places have been severed above the ground. One wonders how the hard Norman masonry can provide nourishment for so vast a mass of evergreen. It is strange, however, how large species manage to exist in barren places. An old print of the castle, dated 1761, shows several trees growing on the summit of the broken battlements, and elder-bushes of considerable size still flourish there.

The late Lord Chancellor Selborne, who was a keen observer of nature, once said that when he was a boy at Winchester he well remembered some fine plants of the red spur-valerian on the tower of the cathedral. It is interesting to know that the plant still flourishes there in considerable abundance. On the walls of the close, which shut in the canons' gardens, some plants of *Erigeron acris* will be seen, while the beautiful little ivy-leaved toad-flax is everywhere. It is curious that John Ray is silent as to the occurrence of this plant in England, though he mentions it as abounding on damp walls and rocks in Italy, and on the walls of Bâle, in Switzerland. Gerarde, however, who gives a very fair woodcut of the plant, says it "growes wilde upon walls in Italy, but in gardens with us." But Parkinson, a contemporary of Gerarde, states that "it groweth naturally in divers places of our land, although formerly it hath not beene knowne to bee but in gardens as about Hatfield and other places that are shadie upon the ground." Since then the plant

has spread generally throughout England, and is now found on most ancient walls. In the Isle of Wight, where it is known as "Roving Jenny" and "Roving Sailor," it flourishes at Carisbrooke Castle, on the ruins at Quarr, and on old walls at Shorwell, Knighton, and elsewhere. In America it has acquired the name of Kenilworth Ivy, doubtless from its growing on the walls of that castle which the genius of Scott has made familiar to the world. It abounds on the venerable walls of St. Cross, Winchester, together with the hairy rock-cress, or *Arabis hirsuta.*

Of the plants which love to blossom on ancient walls the most generally distributed is the wallflower. It may be found on all the ruins in Hampshire—at Wolvesey, Netley, Beaulieu, on the Norman keep at Christchurch, where the flowers are of an exceptionally pale colour, at Quarr and at Carisbrooke. But nowhere is it to be seen in such profusion as at Portchester. The plants begin to flower early in March, and by the first week in April are in full bloom. They blossom everywhere—on the grey Roman walls, on the mighty Norman keep, on the crumbling Plantagenet ruins. Later on the walls of the great banqueting hall will be gay with the flowers of the red valerian, with here and there a gigantic spike of the yellow mullein. But the appearance of the castle is never so picturesque as when the wallflowers are in bloom.

Another mural plant, nearly allied to the wallflower, but easily to be distinguished by its far paler flowers, is the wall-rocket (*Diplotaxis tenuifolia*). It cannot be called rare, and the writer remembers seeing it, among other places, at Dover Castle, at St. Osyth's Priory in Essex, and on the monastic ruins at Dunwich, in

Suffolk. But, strange to say, it is only found in Hampshire in one locality. Though we should expect to find it on most of the ancient walls throughout the county, yet, such is the incomprehensible way of plants, it only cares to grow at Southampton, and there on the old town walls which skirt the western shore it blossoms abundantly.

But perhaps the most interesting species of our wall-flora in Hampshire are to be found on the historic walls of Beaulieu Abbey, and probably date back to the days of the Cistercian monks. In early summer the grey walls of the ruined cloisters are gay with the purple flowers of the wild pink (*Dianthus plumarius*, L.). This plant is the origin of our garden pinks, and is naturalised in only a few places in England. Nowhere else in Hampshire is it to be found save on the cloister walls of the abbey of Beaulieu. In company with the wild pink will be seen another plant with an interesting history. This is *Hyssopus officinalis*, probably identical with the hyssop of Scripture. In the middle ages this plant always had a place in the monastic herb-garden, and was much prized for its medicinal properties. "Hyssop," says the old Herbal, "is a very pretty plant, kept for its virtues. It grows two feet high. The flowers are small, and stand in long spikes at the tops of the branches; they are of a beautiful blue colour. The whole plant has a strong, but not disagreeable, smell." The plant was gathered when just beginning to flower, and dried. The infusion, made in the manner of tea, was "excellent against coughs, hoarsenesses, quinseys, and swellings in the throat." It also, we are told, "helps to expectorate tough phlegm, and is effectual in all cold griefs of the chest or lungs." The monastic herb-garden has now

entirely disappeared, but the hyssop remains, and is as fully established as the pellitory, calamint, and other mural plants which flourish on the picturesque remains of the once "proud abbaye."

The pellitory-of-the-wall, a curious plant belonging to the nettle and hop tribe, is one of the most generally distributed of the wall-flora. A medicinal plant of considerable repute in the olden times, it is found at Quarr and Carisbrooke, and also on the ledges and "greens" which line the almost perpendicular chalk cliffs at Freshwater; most luxuriant, too, on the walls of Portchester and Beaulieu, and many another relic of mediæval magnificence—

> "Where the mouldering walls are seen
> Hung with pellitory green."

But few wall-loving ferns are to be found in this part of England, and these have a tendency to become scarcer. In Gilbert White's time both the ceterach and the rue-leaved spleenwort were to be seen on the walls of Selborne Church. Both these have entirely disappeared, and also *Asplenium Trichomanes* in "Temple Lane." The ceterach only just manages to maintain an existence in Hampshire. The writer knew of a single plant at Portchester, and it may still be found in one or two other localities. The maidenhair spleenwort is commoner, but it is not to be seen in any abundance. The rue-leaved spleenwort (*A. Ruta muraria*, L.) is fairly well distributed both in the island and on the mainland. In some localities, as up the Meon Valley, it is comparatively common, and may be seen on many an old wall, including that of the Saxon church of Corhampton.

One more plant must be mentioned. Every one

knows the yellow biting stonecrop, so common on our rockeries and garden walls. This well-known plant has a very scarce first-cousin with thick leaves and pure white flowers, which at the beginning of the last century flourished on the church walls of one particular parish in the Isle of Wight. This church has since been restored, outside as well as inside; but it is satisfactory and interesting to know that *Sedum dasyphyllum* still maintains a prosperous existence in its old home.

OUR POISONOUS PLANTS

THE number of poisonous species in the British flora is far greater than is generally supposed. Fortunately a few only possess qualities of such a virulent nature as hemlock and the deadly nightshade, but a large number are highly injurious to man. Hardly a summer passes without fatal cases of poisoning by British plants being recorded in the newspapers. In 1899 a child died in Gloucestershire from the effect of eating privet-berries; and in the same year an inquest was held at Birmingham on the bodies of two children who had been poisoned by the fruit of cuckoo-pint. And the number of cases in which the sufferers recover, and which consequently never find their way into print, must be considerable.

To the eye of an ordinary observer there is nothing to distinguish a poisonous berry from a harmless one; and that a large number of our native fruits are not only harmless but wholesome is well known to all dwellers in the country. We need only mention the wild strawberry, the blackberry, the dewberry, and the black currant, formerly known as squinancy-berry from its use in cases of quinsy and sore throat. Elder-berries, too, and the fruit of the blackthorn are largely gathered in some districts for the purpose of making wine and sloe-gin. Other wild fruits, again, if they are not palatable, are at any rate perfectly

innocuous, such as the crab-apple, the wild pear, the wild cherry, and the hips and haws of our hedgerows. But, on the other hand, many British berries contain deleterious properties. The black berries of the spurge laurel—a plant frequently found in woods and copses, of the privet, of the uncanny-looking herb-paris, another denizen of our damp woods, of the trailing garden nightshade, are all poisonous; also the scarlet berries of *Daphne Mezereum*, a rare and handsome shrub still to be found growing wild in certain Hampshire woods, of the arum or cuckoo-pint, commonly known among children as "lords and ladies," of the woody nightshade or bittersweet, and of the common briony. The bright scarlet fruit of the yew-tree contains a seed of dangerous and even deadly quality. But of all our native berries the large black ones of *Atropa Belladonna*, the deadly nightshade, are the most fatal. Even half a berry has been known to cause death within a few hours. Other British plants possess acrid properties in the juices of the stem and leaves; while others again contain a narcotic or an irritant poison in the roots which has proved injurious to man. The poisonous nature of many toadstools is well known, but the Fungi form so entirely a distinct class of botany by themselves that we do not propose to consider them in the present paper.

Now while some orders of plants are remarkable for the large number of species they contain which are useful and beneficial to man, other families have a bad reputation, and most of the members must be regarded with suspicion. Among the former the Grass family is a conspicuous example. From remote antiquity it has formed the principal basis of human

food, and it only possesses one species that is known to be injurious to man. To the Crucifer family we are again indebted for many of our most wholesome garden vegetables, including seakale and watercress and the various descendants of the wild sea-cabbage. On the other hand, the order *Ranunculaceæ*, or the Buttercup family, must be classed among the dangerous tribes. Nearly all the members of this extensive family, including the delicate wood anemone and the traveller's joy, possess baneful properties. The juice of even the beautiful yellow buttercup of our May meadows is sufficiently acrid to blister the hand, and the knowledge of this fact has frequently been made use of by cunning beggars, who, as Gerarde tells us, "do stampe the leaves, and lay it unto their legs and arms, which causeth such filthy ulcers as we daily see (among such wicked vagabonds) to move the people the more to pittie." The following story, related by the same authority, evidently refers to some species of this order. After speaking of the "hot and hurtfull qualities" residing in the juice of certain buttercups, our old herbalist continues, in his quaintest manner: "This calleth to my remembrance an history of a certain Gentleman, dwelling in Lincolnshire, called Mahewe, the true report hereof my very good friend Mr. Nicholas Belson, sometime Fellow of King's College in Cambridge, hath delivered unto me: Mr. Mahewe, dwelling in Boston, a student in physick, having occasion to ride through the fens of Lincolnshire, found a root that the hogs had turned up, which seemed unto him very strange and unknown, for that it was in the spring before the leaves were out; this he tasted, and it so inflamed his mouth, tongue, and lips that it caused them to swell very extremely, so

that before he could get to the towne of Boston he could not speak, and no doubt had lost his life, if that the Lord God had not blessed those good remedies which presently he procured and used."

The two hellebores, *H. fœtidus*, L., and *H. viridis*, L., also belong to the Buttercup family, and are both, especially the former, narcotic-irritant poisons. These handsome plants are but seldom met with in a wild state, but, curious to relate, they both flourish, as has been already noticed, in the historic parish of Selborne, and on the same spots where Gilbert White discovered them more than a century and a half ago. The green hellebore may be seen in the early spring growing abundantly on a steep bank in one of the dark hollow lanes which form so characteristic a feature in the scenery of Selborne. Its rarer and more striking relative, the stinking hellebore, sometimes known as bear's-foot and setterwort, also manages to maintain a position in its old locality, but with difficulty, perhaps owing to its ornamental appearance, which has led to its removal to walks and shrubberies.

But far more deadly than either of the hellebores is *Aconitum Napellus*, L., the monk's-hood or wolf's-bane, known as friar's cap in Devonshire. This plant contains one of the most virulent of vegetable poisons. It was known to the ancients for its deadly properties, and is mentioned, among other writers, by Virgil and Pliny. In Great Britain the aconite as a wild plant is rare, but it is indigenous in Wales and in several English counties—the specimen in the writer's herbarium came from Somerset—while in gardens, from its handsome efflorescence, it is frequently met with. Among the early herbalists the plant is often alluded to because of its poisonous character, or supposed

medicinal virtue. Dr. Turner, in his *Herbal*, dated 1551, says: "This of all poisons is the most hastie poison"; and Will Coles, in his *Art of Simpling*, speaks of it as "a rank poison reported to prevail mightily against the bitings of serpents and vipers." And this seems to have been the common belief, for Ben Jonson says—

> "I have heard that Aconite,
> Being timely taken, hath a healing might
> Against the scorpion's stroke."

The root of this dangerous plant is conical and tapering, and on more than one occasion has been mistaken, with fatal effects, for horse-radish. A case of this kind occurred at Dingwall in Ross-shire in the year 1856, whereby three persons lost their lives.

Another order of plants which contains a number of dangerous species is the *Umbelliferæ*, or Parsley tribe. This is an extensive order, numbering some sixty species in Great Britain, and including in its ranks both useful and injurious plants. While, on the one hand, it provides us with wholesome vegetables, such as carrots and parsnips and celery, and with culinary herbs, as parsley and fennel and samphire, it also contains plants of such baneful properties as hemlock and cowbane. With the exception of aconite and the deadly nightshade, hemlock is probably the most poisonous plant in the British flora. It is not uncommon, especially in the north of England, where it may often be seen on hedgebanks by the wayside. Fortunately it can always be distinguished from all other members of the Umbelliferous family by the appearance of its stems, which are mottled and dotted all over with irregular spots and blotches

of a red or dull purple colour. In ancient times the poison prepared from this plant, now known as "conia," is said to have been the state poison of Athens, by which Socrates was put to death. It will be remembered that the "root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark" formed part of the ingredients of the witches' caldron in Macbeth—a plant, says our old friend Gerarde, "very evill, hurtful, dangerous, poisonous, inasmuch that whosoever taketh of it into his body dieth remedilesse." Closely allied to the hemlock, and almost as baneful, is the water-dropwort, *Œnanthe crocata*, L., sometimes called hemlock-dropwort. The leaves of this plant, which is abundant in ditches and marshes throughout Great Britain, bear a great resemblance to those of the wild celery, while its roots have been sometimes mistaken for parsnips with disastrous results. John Ray relates, on the authority of one Dr. Francis Vaughan, a learned physician in Ireland, how "eight young lads went one afternoon a fishing to a brook in the county of Tipperary, and there, meeting with a great parcel of this plant, did eat a great deal of the roots of them. About four or five hours after going home, the eldest of them, who was almost of man's stature, without the least previous appearing disorder or complaint, on a sudden fell down backward, and lay kicking and sprawling on the ground. His countenance soon became ghastly, and he foamed at the mouth. Soon after four more were seized the same way, and they all died before morning. Of the other three, one ran stark mad, but came to his right reason again next morning. Another had his hair and nails fall off, and the third (Dr. Vaughan's brother-in-law) alone escaped without receiving any harm." Many other instances

are on record of the poisonous effects of this plant. In 1758 a person died at Havant, in Hampshire, "from having taken," says Mr. Watson, "about four spoonfuls of the juice of the root, instead of that of the water-parsnip." In more recent times the case is recorded of a number of convicts, working on the banks of the Thames near Woolwich, who finding a quantity of this plant, and, believing it to be the wild parsnip, partook of it. Shortly afterwards nine of the men were seized with convulsions and six of them died. In this instance, as in several others recorded of poisoning by this plant, all the sufferers were affected with tetanus and delirium.

Another plant that appears to have caused mischief in former days by being mistaken for a harmless relative is the perennial or dog's mercury. This species, which is a very common plant, closely resembles the annual mercury which, in days when garden vegetables were scarcer than they are now, was commonly used as a pot-herb, and several cases are on record in which painful results followed a mistaking of the one for the other. Dr. John Hill, in his *Family Herbal*, says, with his usual exaggeration, "there is not a more fatal Plant, Native of our Country, than this; many have been known to die by eating it boiled with their Food; and probably many also whom we have not heard of." Still Ray relates an instance in which a man, his wife, and three children suffered severely from eating it fried with bacon; and as late as 1820 several fatal cases occurred from this cause near Worcester among a party of Irish vagrants. The plant belongs to the Spurge family, which contains several other injurious species.

But by far the most dangerous order in the British

flora is the *Solanaceæ*, or Nightshade family. To this same order belong, strange to say, the potato, first brought to England from Virginia by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1586, and the tomato-plant. But four species of this large and important family can claim to be British, although one other, the thorn-apple, has found its way over from America, and is now frequently met with, as at Portchester, in a semi-wild state. These four species are the dwale, or deadly nightshade; the henbane; and the two common nightshades, sometimes distinguished as the woody nightshade and the garden nightshade. These last species, which are closely allied to each other, though often confounded, at least in name, with the deadly nightshade, are far less poisonous, and, unlike their more dangerous relative, are common plants, being frequently met with in waste places, by the roadside, and as a weed in gardens. In appearance they are entirely different from the deadly nightshade, and it is strange that they should ever have been confounded. The woody nightshade, or bittersweet, is a long, straggling plant, of untidy habit, which may be often seen climbing among bushes by the wayside, and is well marked by its purple flowers with yellow anthers, which are followed by clusters of scarlet berries. Its near relation, the black or garden nightshade, is a common weed in cultivated ground, having small white flowers, resembling those of the last species in form and also in the colour of the anthers, but succeeded by black berries. The deadly nightshade (*Atropa Belladonna*, L.), on the other hand, is a tall and stately plant, often three and even four feet in height, with large pubescent, egg-shaped leaves, and solitary, drooping, campanulate flowers of a dull

purple hue. In the place of the flowers "come forth great round berries of the bignesse of the black chery, green at the first, but when they be ripe of the colour of black jet or burnished horne, soft, and full of purple juice." It is these tempting berries that are "so furious and deadly." "To give you an example hereof," says our good herbalist, "it shall not be amisse: it came to passe that three boies of Wisbich in the Isle of Ely did eate of the pleasant and beautifull fruit hereof, two whereof died in lesse than eight hours after that they had eaten of them. The third child had a quantitie of honey and water mixed together given him to drinke, causing him to vomit after: God blessed this meanes, & the child recovered. Banish therefore," adds this wise "master in chirurgerie," "these pernitious plants out of your gardens, and all places neere to your houses where children do resort." The dwale, or deadly nightshade, is probably "the insane root" of Shakespeare, which "takes the reason prisoner"; and it is supposed to be the plant which occasioned such disastrous consequences to the Roman troops when retreating from the Parthians, concerning which Plutarch tells us that "those who sought for roots and pot-herbs found few that they had been accustomed to eat, and in tasting unknown herbs they met with one that brought on madness and death. He that had eaten of it immediately lost all memory and knowledge; but at the same time would busy himself in turning and moving every stone he met with, as if he was upon some very important pursuit. The camp was full of unhappy men bending to the ground, and thus digging up and removing stones, till at last they were carried off by a bilious vomiting, when wine, the only remedy, was not to be had." It

is also related by Buchanan that when the Danes under Sweno invaded Scotland and gained a victory near Perth, the Scots, having arranged a truce, agreed to supply the hostile army with food. This they proceeded to do, having first mingled with the bread the juice of the deadly dwale, which stupefied the invaders, who were then slain by their treacherous foes.

The deadly nightshade seems to have been formerly a far commoner plant than it is now. Gerarde speaks of it as growing plentifully in the Isle of Ely, in Lincolnshire, and in other localities; and John Ray mentions many places where in his day it was to be found, as "in the lanes about Fulbourn in Cambridgeshire plentifully," at Cuckstone, near Rochester in Kent, "where all the Yards and Backsides are over-run with it." Less than a hundred years ago, it is noted by Thomas Garnier, afterwards Dean of Winchester, a famous Hampshire botanist and horticulturist, that the plant "abounded on the roadsides at Otterbourne," a village some four miles from the cathedral city, and since associated with the names of Keble and of Charlotte Yonge, and he adds, "I mean to procure its being rooted up from thence, as a very dangerous situation for it." The plant has now disappeared from the wayside at Otterbourne, perhaps owing to Mr. Garnier's intervention, and indeed it has become a great rarity in Hampshire, being only found in one or two localities. In the Isle of Wight it is entirely extinct, but on the mainland it may still be seen in an old disused chalk-pit, not far from Selborne, where it doubtless flourished in the days of Gilbert White, and in another locality known to the writer, where it grows in such extraordinary abundance as to call for special

notice. The name of the place shall not be mentioned: it will be sufficient to speak of it as the Warren. A desolate and dreary region is this stretch of elevated land, far from any human habitation, but the home of countless rabbits, and the nesting-place of the great Norfolk plover. The soil is parched and arid in the extreme, consisting of coarse sand or gravel, with here and there a mixture of crumbling chalk. In places the surface is absolutely bare, as bare as the sea-shore, but for the most part overspread with a scanty covering of herbage, with pale moss and sickly lichens, and strange abundance of yellow stonecrop. Two deep depressions run in a parallel direction across the Warren, and, like the rest of this weird and blighted wilderness, are entirely destitute of trees, except here and there a gnarled and stunted thorn or elder heavily laden with grey and shaggy lichens. A veritable valley of Hinnom has this Hampshire warren been called, where all poisonous and deadly herbs flourish as in a witch's garden. Here *Atropa Belladonna* may be seen, not in single plants scattered about here and there, but in lavish and incredible abundance. There are thousands of lusty plants. The rabbits fatten upon the leaves and acquire, it is said, a superior flavour. As the summer advances the large bushy plants become loaded with their shining black berries, and make a show not readily forgotten. And the dwale has other deadly plants to keep it company. Its first cousin, the henbane, only occasionally met with elsewhere in Hampshire, grows plentifully on the Warren. It is almost as poisonous as the nightshade, and the whole plant, as Nicholas Culpeper remarks, "has a very heavy, ill, soporiferous smell, somewhat offensive." Here, too, may be seen rank masses of hemlock, and

nettles, and gorgeous foxgloves from which the deadly drug *digitalis* is extracted. Scattered along the lonely waste are plants of the black mullein, and the stinking black horehound, while trailing over the dry and naked soil will be seen in wonderful abundance the cucumber-like stems of the common or red-berried bryony. This again is a plant of ill-repute, and has played a conspicuous part among quacks and herbalists. The roots are often of immense size, and Will Coles in his *Art of Simpling* tells us that "witches take the roots of bryony, which simple folks take for the true mandrake, and make thereof an ugly image by which they represent the person on whom they intend to exercise their witchcraft." Gerarde relates that "the Queen's chiefe Surgion, Mr. William Godorous, a very curious and learned gentleman, shewed me a root herof that waied half a hundred weight, and of the bignes of a child of a yeare old." The berries, which are of a dull scarlet colour and grow in small clusters, are highly poisonous, and withal of a most fetid and sickening odour. Indeed, wrote a distinguished botanist, who visited the Warren some fifty years ago, "the smell on a hot summer's day from such a multitude of ill-favoured weeds is far from refreshing, and quite overpowers the fragrant honeysuckle, the only sweet and innocent thing that lives to throw a charm over what is else but dead, dreary, and baleful."

We have not by any means exhausted the number of species of British plants which may be regarded as dangerous. Many members both of the Daffodil and the Lily families, including such beautiful species as the *Narcissus*, the snowflake, the fritillary, the autumn crocus, the lily of the valley, contain harmful properties in their bulbs; but instances of poisoning by these

plants are rare. Far otherwise is the case with some of those species treated in this paper. Quite recently a sad and fatal case of belladonna poisoning occurred on the borders of Sussex. A party of four children, in the course of an afternoon's ramble near Emsworth, came across several plants of the deadly nightshade loaded with fruit. Ignorant of their poisonous properties, and naturally attracted by their tempting appearance, they ate a number of the dark purple berries. On returning home to tea they were all seized with the usual symptoms of belladonna poisoning —dry throat, a difficulty in swallowing, rapid pulse, widely dilated pupils, and delirium. The local surgeon, who was quickly summoned, at once realised the gravity of the situation, and without delay applied the proper remedies. In the case of the three younger children his skill and promptitude were rewarded with success; but the fourth sufferer, a lad of eleven who had come from Portsmouth to spend a few days in the country, never rallied, but passed away early on the following morning.

FLOWERS OF THE FIELD

It is difficult to define a weed. In popular language a large number of plants so designated are of distinct beauty and interest. There are flowers of the field, as well as of the woods and moorlands and of the sea-shore. Some rare and delicate species are to be found among what Shakespeare calls "the idle weeds that grow among our sustaining corn," and few will venture to deny that a large wheatfield overrun with scarlet poppies is a splendid sight, or a wide stretch of yellow charlock, a veritable "field of the cloth of gold." The truth is that the term "weed" has reference rather to the locality in which the plant is found than to any peculiarity in the species itself. It is a plant growing where it is not wanted. It is not any particular plant, or species of plants; it is any plant, no matter how beautiful or how botanically interesting, which has trespassed on cultivated ground and is injurious to the growing crop. It is a troublesome intruder: it is an agricultural nuisance.

In ancient times, among our old writers, all corn-field plants seem to have been classed together under the general names of "cockle" or "darnel." The words stood for all hurtful weeds that "choke the herbs for want of husbandry." "Under the name of *Cockle* and *Darnel*," says old Newton in his *Herbal*, published in 1587, "is comprehended all vicious,

noisom, and unprofitable graine, encombring and hindring good corne." And in that sense "cockle" had been already used by Chaucer. It is further of interest to notice that in the Anglo-Saxon version of the Parable of the Tares, recorded in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, the strange Greek word *ζιζάνια*, not found in classical literature, and simply Latinised in the Vulgate *zizania*, is translated *coccel*, and this rendering is followed by Wycliff, and in other early versions of the New Testament. The following is from the Rheims translation, published in 1582, and so strange does the rendering sound to ears accustomed to the Authorised Version that it is worth quoting in full. The parable is headed "The sower of the cockle," and runs thus: "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit then appeared also the cockle. Then the servants of the master of the house came and said to him: Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it cockle? And he saith to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou then that we go and gather it up? And he said: No; lest while ye gather up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Let both grow until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn." We get another illustration of the same use in the quaint and vigorous sermons of good Bishop Latimer, who exclaims: "Oh, that our prelates would bee as diligent to sowe the

corne of goode doctrine, as Sathan is to sow Cockel and Darnel." And so with Gower, and Spenser, and Shakespeare. But if the poets and preachers speak in general terms, the old herbalists were beginning to discriminate between cockle and darnel and other weeds. Cockle was becoming restricted to the purple corn-cockle (*Agrostemma Githago*, L.), and darnel to the wheat-like grass (*Lolium temulentum*, L.). Dr. Turner notices in his *Names of Herbes*, published in 1548, this confusion of terms. "Some," he says, "take cockel for lolio, but thei are far decyved as I shal declare at large if God wil, in my Latin herbal." A few years later the identification of darnel with *Lolium* is clear; and in his famous *Herbal*, under a fairly good representation of the plant, Gerarde says, "Among the hurtfull weeds Darnell is the first," and he goes on to describe accurately the species, which he identifies, and doubtless rightly, with the *zizania* of Gospel history.

Darnel is an annual corn-field weed, fortunately not generally distributed, at any rate in these days, the seeds of which bear a striking resemblance to grains of wheat. The injurious properties of the plant were well known to the ancients, for Virgil speaks of it as *infelix lolium*. The stem and foliage are innocuous, and in some countries, as at Malta, where the species is abundant, the plant is used as fodder: it is the seed only that is poisonous, and many instances are on record of its baneful effects, which are said to resemble intoxication. This was noticed by Gerarde, who says that "the new bread wherein Darnell is, eaten hot, causeth drunkennesse; in like manner doth beere or ale wherein the seed is fallen, or put into the malt." Indeed, in the Middle Ages it seems to have been a

not uncommon custom to purposely intermix the seeds of darnel with the grain from which the malt was made, in order to enhance the intoxicating power of the beer. In some parts of the country, as in Dorsetshire and in the Isle of Wight, this plant is known as "cheat," from its resemblance to the wheat amongst which it grows. The seeds of the corn-cockle were also supposed in former days to possess qualities highly injurious to man. This handsome plant, with its upright downy stem and fine purple flowers, is often abundant in corn-fields, and it is difficult to prevent its large seeds from becoming mixed with the wheat at threshing-time. Gerarde, who rightly identifies corn-cockle with *Githago segetum*, Desf., quaintly says: "What hurt it doth among corne, the spoile of bread, as well in colour, taste, and unwholesomnesse, is better knowne than desired." It seems doubtful, however, if this fine plant deserves so sweeping a condemnation.

There is yet another plant which bears a bad reputation from the same cause. This is the purple cow-wheat (*Melampyrum arvense*, L.), "a gaudy but most pernicious weed," with oblong seeds like black wheat grains, which, becoming mixed with the corn, is said to render the flour dark and unwholesome. This plant is very local, but usually abundant where it occurs, as in some parts of East Anglia, especially of Norfolk, and in the Isle of Wight. In the latter station, from Ventnor to St. Lawrence, in the corn-fields above the Undercliff, and inland as far as Whitwell, this truly splendid "weed" flourishes in extraordinary abundance. It is the characteristic plant of the locality. Seen for the first time, one is amazed at the sight of this strange and showy species growing in such remarkable profusion. It flourishes

not only among the wheat and barley, but also on the dry banks and grassy borders of the fields; it has invaded the bushy slopes above Pelham Woods, and may be seen all along the upper edge of the cliff. How the plant came to find a home in the island it is now impossible to discover. It is not mentioned as growing there by the early botanists, and its presence could not possibly have been overlooked. Its long leafy spikes of purple and yellow flowers, with beautifully variegated tracts of a bright rose colour, render it one of the most conspicuous plants in the British Flora. Gerarde, who gives an illustration of it in his *Herbal*, speaks of the species as a "stranger in England." John Ray, on the authority of one Mr. F. Sherard, gives as its only locality, "In the corn on the right hand just before you come to Lycham, in Norfolk." The *Flora Anglica*, published in 1798, quotes Ray's statement, and adds a few additional localities. But the earliest record of it as growing in the Isle of Wight occurs in a list of island plants published in 1823. A few years later Dr. Bromfield, who found it in vast abundance in its present locality, carefully investigated its history. Local tradition asserted that the plant was imported with wheat-seed from "foreign parts"—some said Spain, some Jersey, others, with more probability, from Norfolk. He learnt that it was the custom at harvest time to pull up the weed with the greatest care, and carry it off the fields in bags, and to burn it, picking up the very seeds from the ground wherever they could be perceived lying. The bread, he was told, made from the wheat on the farms above the Undercliff was not so dark coloured and "hot" as it used to be, and that the "droll" plant was less plen-

tiful than formerly. Its local name was "Poverty weed," with reference, no doubt, not only to the way in which it impoverished the soil, but also to the fact that the seeds, becoming mixed with the corn, rendered the latter of small value in the market. It is a curious fact that abundant as the weed is on the farms it has invaded, it does not appear to have made fresh conquests of late years. Indeed, its area was almost exactly the same in 1901 as it was in 1838, when Dr. Bromfield visited the locality.

In the British Flora there are some twenty to thirty plants which bear the specific name of *arvensis*, a word derived from the Latin *arvum*, which denotes a ploughed field. Of these weeds so specially associated with agriculture the greatest pests are the thistle and the charlock. Hooker speaks of the former as "the commonest pest of agriculture," and in some districts it is extraordinarily abundant. But it is not perhaps so generally troublesome as the charlock. This yellow-flowered, cruciferous plant, sometimes and rightly called "wild mustard," and known in Scotland as "skellocks," is truly "an odious weed in tillage land." The direct mischief caused by it is not only that it overshadows the young growing corn, but, in a dry season especially, it sucks up the moisture and goodness of the soil which should have gone to nourish the wheat crop. Indirectly, too, it does harm by encouraging the turnip "fly" or flea-beetle, and by harbouring the slime fungus which specially attacks cruciferous crops. Of late years an attempt has been made by spraying the young plants with a solution of sulphate of copper to destroy this pest in its early state, and the experiment is regarded by many scientific agriculturists with favour. Among

other corn-field weeds to which the term *arvensis* has been assigned, from the frequency of their occurrence in arable land, may be mentioned the corn-spurry, the field-parsley, the common pimpernel or poor-man's weather-glass, the field forget-me-not, the field stachys, the corn-mint, fumitory, shepherd's purse, and bindweed. These plants, however, with the exception of the last, which in some places is a most troublesome weed, are comparatively harmless to the farmer. There is a passage in Crabbe's *Village* in which the poet, who found his main delight in botany, gathers together several of these corn-field intruders. He is doubtless thinking of the bleak, wind-swept land above the cliffs at Aldeburgh, where—

> "Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
> Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye;
> There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
> And to the ragged infant threaten war;
> There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
> There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
> Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
> The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf:
> O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
> And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
> With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
> And a sad splendour vainly shines around."

It is marvellous how rapidly some plants will spread themselves over wide stretches of land. The writer was struck with the way in which the yellow charlock took possession of the line when the Meon Valley railway was being made a few years ago. The very next spring after the embankments were thrown up their sides were clothed with this rampant and conspicuous crucifer. A line of yellow across the country marked

in many places the course of the railway. Poppies, too, for some unknown reason, will occasionally appear in strange and wonderful profusion. The striking instance related by Lord Macaulay may be quoted by way of illustration. After the battle of Landen the ground, he tells us, "during many months was strewn with skulls and bones of men and horses, and with fragments of hats and shoes, saddles and holsters. The next summer, the soil, fertilised by twenty thousand corpses, broke forth into millions of poppies. The traveller who, on the road from Saint Tron to Tirlemont, saw that vast sheet of rich scarlet spreading from Landen to Neerwinden, could hardly help fancying that the figurative prediction of the Hebrew prophet was literally accomplished, that the earth was disclosing her blood, and refusing to cover the slain." In districts where the land is poor and badly cultivated one not infrequently comes across fields almost wholly occupied with weeds of cultivation, such as the corn marigold, the purple corn-cockle, or the stinking Mayweed. Sometimes a more uncommon species has taken possession of the soil. In a chalky upland field in the neighbourhood of Winchester the writer once met with the field chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*, L.) in extraordinary profusion, and it made a striking appearance with its large white flowers. In the same neighbourhood a grass-sown field that bordered the high road near Bishop's Waltham was literally purple, to the extent of several acres, with the flowers of the early meadow orchis. Gerarde, the herbalist, who made many botanical excursions about England in the latter part of the sixteenth century, speaks of the abundance of the yellow melilot in parts of Essex. "About Clare and Heningham" (Castle Hedingham)

he saw "very many acres overgrown with it, insomuch that it doth not onely spoyle the land, but the corne also, as cockle or darnel, and is a weed that generally spreadeth over that corner of the shire."

Sometimes most interesting and delicate plants are found among the corn. The beautiful *Adonis* or pheasant's eye will never be forgotten if once seen. This striking little annual, with its finely-cut leaves and bright scarlet flowers, belongs to the buttercup tribe, and is only occasionally met with. Still, in places it has firmly established itself, and year after year may be found on the same farms. In the chalky corn-fields above the Undercliff in the Isle of Wight it has been known for many years, and may be seen every summer in company with lamb's lettuce, the dainty field madder, and the gaudy cow wheat. But in one district in Hampshire it may be regarded, at least in some seasons, as plentiful. More than a century ago it was found on a farm between Alresford and Winchester, and there it has remained ever since. Year after year it comes up in the wheat and barley fields, some summers in considerable profusion. The writer once noticed a large bunch of it in a poor woman's hand who sat opposite to him in a railway carriage. He ventured to ask her where she had obtained it; sure enough it came from the farm above alluded to. "There was a wonderful sight of it," the good woman said. The modest little mouse-tail is a near relative of the pheasant's eye, and, like it, is but rarely seen. It is so called from the arrangement of the carpets or seed vessels, which form a close slender spike, sometimes two inches in length, and resembling, says an old botanist, "very notably the taile of a mouse." It is most erratic in its habits, suddenly

appearing in spots where it had been unknown before. Kingsley tells us that for fourteen years he had hunted for it in vain at Eversley, while in the fifteenth it appeared by dozens upon a new-made bank, which had been for at least two hundred years a farmyard gateway. Yet another plant of the same genus which is occasionally met with among the corn is the beautiful field larkspur. Ray mentions it as having been "found in great plenty by Mr. F. Sherard amongst the corn in Swafham Field in Cambridge-shire"; and in the same district it is still in some seasons not uncommon. It is an exceedingly pretty plant with its terminal racemes of blue or pink or white flowers. Ray has also chronicled several uncommon plants as growing in the cornfields near his home at Black Notley in Essex. Among these may be specially mentioned the common thorow-wax, or "thorow-leafe," a name given to the plant now known as *Bupleurum rotundifolium*, L., by Dr. Wm. Turner in the sixteenth century, because, as he says, "the stalke waxeth throw the leaves"; and the "small narrow-leaved cudweed, very much branched, and full of seed" (*Filago gallica*, L.), one of the rarest of British plants, which it is satisfactory to notice still finds a home in the Essex cornfields. One more plant which frequents similar situations calls for notice. This is the corn bell-flower (*Specularia hybrida*, D.), known among the older botanists as Venus's looking-glasse or codded corn violet. It is a distinguished-looking little annual, some eight or ten inches in height, with dark-blue flowers. The writer has seen it in the sandy fields between Sandown and Shanklin in the Isle of Wight, but it is more frequently met with in the Eastern Counties. It is not uncommon in parts of Essex, and a few years ago it could always

be found at the right season on a farm near the picturesque village of Finchingfield.

But if weeds be a perennial nuisance to the farmer, they are no less a source of constant annoyance to the gardener. Gilbert White used to employ a "weeding woman" at Selborne, in order, as he tells us, that his garden might be neat and tidy against the arrival of visitors; and, indeed, in some years daily attention is imperative if the rampant intruders are to be held in check. After rain the borders quickly become smothered with groundsel and veronica, and in some districts with the annual mercury. But more troublesome still, because of the difficulty of eradicating them, are the lesser convolvulus and the gout weed, whose long, white, creeping roots will continue to grow if the smallest particle be left in the soil. The former of these truly pestiferous weeds is strangely known among the market gardeners near Portsmouth as "lilies"; while the latter, as its name implies, was formerly a famous remedy for the gout, and was therefore doubtless cultivated in many gardens as a medicinal herb.

Still now and again some interesting plants appear as "weeds" in gardens. Canary-grass and buckwheat, and the caper spurge, are not uncommon visitors. A few specimens of the very rare finger-glass (*Digitaria humifusa*, Pers.) appeared one year in the writer's herbaceous border at Portchester, and for several years in succession the almost equally rare bristle-grass (*Setaria viridis*, Beauv.). In another garden in the same parish the white goose foot (*Chenopodium ficifolium*, Sm.) made its appearance in 1893: this species had never been noticed in Hampshire before; but in the following season it

was repeatedly searched for in vain. Another rare Hampshire plant is the treacle mustard, sometimes from its general habit of growth called wallflower mustard. It is not infrequently met with as a corn-field weed in parts of East Anglia, but in Hants it had merely been noticed in one or two localities, and then only single specimens were found. Strange to say, it appeared a few seasons ago in abundance in an old garden associated with memories of Izaak Walton in the Meon Valley. In some gardens in the South of England, especially in the Isle of Wight, the sweet-scented coltsfoot, or, as it is sometimes called from its time of flowering, the winter heliotrope, has firmly established itself. It is often in blossom as early as January, and with its fragrant flowers is not an unwelcomed intruder, except when it strays beyond the limits of the shrubbery. "In the garden at Swainston," consecrated by Tennyson's lines beginning—

> "Nightingales warbled without,
> Within was weeping for thee,"

the plant is remarkably abundant.

John Ray noted the broad-leaved spurge as "coming up spontaneously here in my own orchard at Black Notley," and a specimen of this uncommon plant, gathered by his friend Dr. Dale in "Ray's orchard," is preserved in Buddle's Herbarium at the South Kensington Museum. A few years ago the writer visited Ray's house "on Dewlands," now, alas! burnt to the ground, and searched in vain for the broad-leaved spurge. The place has been much altered since the great naturalist died there in 1705, and the orchard has been mostly stubbed up. An ancient pear-tree, however, was standing, which

JOHN RAY

(From an old Engraving.)

b. 1628: d. 1705

tradition alleged to have been planted by the botanist himself. And beneath its lichen-covered branches there was growing among the potatoes a most rare and interesting "weed." It was the lovely blue pimpernel (*Anagallis cærulea*, Sch.). Seldom, indeed, is this dainty little annual met with, but once seen its beauty will never be forgotten. Old Gerarde and the early botanists regarded it as a distinct species, and called it "the blew-flowred or female pimpernell," in distinction to "the male or scarlet pimpernell," or poor man's weather-glass. Once or twice only had the writer seen this delicate and lovely variety of the scarlet *Anagallis;* and there, in one of the most interesting of British localities, in the garden of the "house on Dewlands"—the home of the celebrated John Ray, where he wrote his *Synopsis of British Plants*, the first true English Flora—beneath the venerable pear-tree which his own hands had planted, there opened to the sunlight the exquisite blue petals of *Anagallis cærulea*. The fragile little annual was carefully secured, and afterwards no less carefully preserved, and is now among the most valued specimens in the dark oaken cabinet which holds the writer's collection of flowers of the field.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF PLANTS

It cannot be doubted that the flora of Great Britain has considerably changed during the last three hundred years. On the one hand a goodly number of plants, many of them from America, have found their way into this country and have become completely naturalised. Among these may be mentioned such characteristic species as the pretty yellow balsam, which lines the banks of the Wey near Guildford and of other Surrey streams; the little white Claytonia, which may now be found abundantly on the sandy heaths of Bagshot and of Wolmer Forest; and the Canadian pond-weed, which since 1847 has spread so rapidly through our canals and rivers. But, on the other hand, many interesting species of the old English flora have become exceedingly scarce, while a few have altogether disappeared. Some plants, apparently common in the days of the early botanists, must now be reckoned among our greatest rarities, and will never again be found in their old localities. If "Master Doctor" Turner, or Gerarde the herbalist, or the illustrious John Ray, could come to life again, they would search in vain the ancient haunts of many of their most notable species. Many causes have contributed to this unfortunate result. The growth of towns con-

sequent on the vast increase of our population, the draining of the Fens, improved methods of agriculture, the rapacity of dealers, the collecting energy of modern botanists—all have helped to impoverish the richness of the British flora. Still, considering the changed condition of the face of the country, it may be a matter of surprise that the number of rare plants is not more seriously reduced.

But few species, at any rate, have become absolutely extinct in Great Britain. The Alpine cotton-grass is gone from the bogs of Forfar, and a sedge from its only known locality near Bath. A vetch with "long white flowers," formerly found by Ray on Glastonbury Tor, is also gone, and a near relation, *Vicia lævigata*, which once occupied the Chesil Beach near Weymouth, and is now extinct, not only in England, but in the whole world. That interesting member of the Lily group, *Simethis bicolor*, formerly to be found near Bournemouth, was extirpated before the year 1875; and it is to be feared that the little *Holosteum umbellatum* will never again be seen on the old walls of Norwich, or Bury, or Eye.

But while few species have become entirely extinct as regards Great Britain as a whole, yet a large number seem to be on the verge of it. Plants formerly not uncommon, and to be found in several counties, are now extremely rare and confined to one or two localities. This is especially the case with some of our orchids; and several species, such as the lizard orchis, the coral-root, the lady's slipper, the leafless *Epipogum*, and the Fen orchis, may soon have to be reckoned among our extinct species. The sweet-scented sea stock, one of the most showy and beautiful plants in our native flora, is extinct on the cliffs at

Hastings, and is now only to be found in the Isle of Wight, where it flourishes on the perpendicular face of the inaccessible chalk cliffs. The exquisite little Tricomena, a dwarf member of the Iris family, exists only in one locality in South Devon. In former years the rugged heights of Portland were clothed with the handsome tree-mallow, which also grew "at Hurst Castle, over against the Isle of Wight." In both these localities, and indeed along the whole of the southern coast, except in Devon and Cornwall, this splendid plant, so dear to the ancient herbalists, will now be sought for in vain.

In the Isle of Wight, to take a small and well-known botanical district, many plants formerly existed which must now be omitted from the *Flora Vectensis*. To judge from a statement in the works of de l'Obel, the sea-colewort or wild cabbage, the parent of our garden species, was formerly not uncommon on the Island cliffs. As late as the middle of the last century it grew plentifully on the crumbled chalk at the foot of the Culvers. It had disappeared from that locality by the year 1870, and is now lost to the Island. About the year 1835 John Stuart Mill, who found his only recreation in botany, discovered in Sandown Bay a single specimen of the rare purple sponge. This specimen is still carefully preserved, but the plant has not been met with in the Island since. On the pebbly beach of the same bay the seaside everlasting pea formerly existed; this, too, is gone, and also the very rare *Diotis maritima*, or seaside cotton-weed. In the rough, broken ground of the Undercliff, especially in the neighbourhood of the little church of St. Lawrence, once celebrated as the smallest church in England, and about the ivy-clad ruins of Wolverton, that hand-

some plant, the stinking hellebore or setterwort, formerly grew in some abundance. It was plentiful in the year 1839, when the celebrated botanist, Dr. Bromfield, visited the spot, when he pronounced it to be, in his opinion, "most certainly wild." Since then the neighbourhood has been much built over, and a good deal of the "rough ground" has been converted into private gardens, and it is to be feared that this most interesting plant has perished. Near the grand old Jacobean manor-house of Knighton, now, alas! pulled down, but of which we have so fine a description in Legh Richmond's *Dairyman's Daughter*, there formerly grew the dwale, or deadly nightshade, a striking plant both in flower and in fruit. This, like the "large and venerable mansion," has disappeared, and must now, with other notable species—the proliferous pink, the grass of Parnassus, the spider orchis, the beautiful white helleborine, and the vernal squill—be counted as extinct in the Isle of Wight.

The disappearance of some of these plants is doubtless due to what may be called the sporadic nature of certain species. It is the way of some plants to suddenly spring up in a strange locality, to remain perhaps for a few years, and as mysteriously to disappear. We have a striking illustration of this in the case of *Sisymbrium Irio*, or the London rocket. The plant, as is well known, received its English name from the curious fact that after the Great Fire of London in 1666 it came up plentifully "among the rubbish in the ruines." During the two following summers it was abundant, Ray tells us, and even established itself "on the Lord Cheney's wall at Chelsey," but finally it entirely disappeared. An equally striking instance occurred at Aldborough, in

Suffolk, in the case of *Lathyrus maritimus*, the sea-side everlasting pea. Old Stow, in his *Chronicle*, tells us that "in the great dearth which happened in the year 1555 the poor people in this part of the country maintained themselves and their children with these Pease, which," saith he, "to a miracle sprung up in the autumn among the bare stones of their own accord, and bore fruit sufficient for thousands of people." "That these Pease did spring up miraculously for the relief of the poor I believe not," adds John Ray, who repeats the story; "neither did they owe their original to shipwracks or Pease cast out of ships, as Camden hints to be the opinion of the wiser; but, without doubt, sprung up at first spontaneously." Ray speaks of the plant as still (1695) growing abundantly on "the stone-baich between Orford and Alburgh, called the shingle, especially on the further end towards Orford." It is now very rare, and has not, we believe, been met with on the Suffolk coast for many years. This sporadic nature doubtless explains the disappearance of the same plant from the beach at Sandown, as well as of the purple spurge and of *Diotis maritima*. In former years this latter plant has been recorded for many localities along the coast. Gerarde found it in Mersea Isle, off the Essex shore; it grew at Southwold in Suffolk, and near the ruins of old Dunwich Church; it has been met with near Poole and Bridport in Dorsetshire, and at several spots on the Cornish coast; but in all these places it is now probably extinct. It is well known that in some seasons certain of our orchidaceous plants are far more abundant than in others. This is specially the case with those species which frequent the downs, such as the bee orchis, the frog orchis, and the musk

orchis. In the early summer of 1898 the latter appeared in extraordinary abundance on a small patch of down-land in the writer's parish. There were literally hundreds of plants. Not content with occupying the down, they invaded the *débris* of an adjoining chalk-pit, and sprang up in every possible situation. The following season it required a good deal of searching to find so much as a single specimen.

But if in some few instances the disappearance of interesting plants can be thus naturally accounted for, in the great majority of cases it is due to the inroads of civilisation, with its building operations and scientific methods of agriculture. It is very curious to come across, in old books, the names of plants and wild flowers which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were to be seen growing in London and its neighbourhood. There are many such notices to be found scattered up and down the writings of Gerarde and Ray, and others of the early botanists. For instance, the little wall-rue fern was to be found on "an old stone conduit between Islington and Jack Straw's Castle," and the royal Osmunda flourished on Hampstead Heath, together with the lily-of-the-valley. The mistletoe might be seen growing "on some trees at Clarendon House, St. James's." In Lambeth Marsh the very rare "frogge-bit" grew, "where any that is disposed may see it," and the arrow-head in "the Tower ditch," and also "by Lambeth Bridge over against the Archbishop of Canterbury's Palace." In the "moat that encompasses the seat of the Right Reverend the Bishop of London at Fulham" might be seen the sweet-smelling flag, and the yellow water-lily, and the scarce *Cardamine impatiens*. The sweet-scented camomile was

common at Westminster, and the wild clary in "the fields of Holborne neere unto Grayes Inne"; in "a lane against St. Pancras' Church" the wild lettuce grew, and the deadly nightshade in a ditch at Islington, and the beautiful marsh gentian on Clapham Common; while the rare vervaine mallow was to be seen "on the ditch sides on the left hand of the place of execution by London, called Tyborn." Needless to say, these plants have long since disappeared; and what has happened in the case of the "all-devouring wen," as Cobbett years ago called London, has been repeated in a lesser degree in many districts throughout the country.

But more destructive to all native flora than even the growth of towns must be reckoned the vast system of drainage which has been carried out in many parts of England. In olden times, to take the most striking illustration, the great fen district of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon was a grand place to the naturalist. Kingsley has painted in glowing colours the ancient glories of Whittlesea Mere, where "dark green alders and pale green reeds stretched for miles round the broad lagoon; where the coot clanked and the bittern boomed, and the sedge-bird, not content with its own sweet song, mocked the notes of all the birds around; while high overhead hung, motionless, hawk beyond hawk, buzzard beyond buzzard, kite beyond kite, as far as eye could see." It is all changed now. The vast solitude, the home of some of our rarest wild-flowers, the haunt of the great copper butterfly, now lost to the whole world, the breeding-place of ruffs and reeves, has been converted into enormous cornfields, where—

> "All the land in flowery squares,
> Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
> Smells of the coming summer."

And the rare plants are gone. The fen orchis, *Liparis Loeselii*, the glory of the fen flora, formerly to be found in Burwell and Bottisham fens, and elsewhere in similar situations in the Eastern counties, is now probably extinct; and the same must be said of the well-known rarities of the district, *Senecio paludosus*, *S. palustris*, and *Sonchus palustris*, or the marsh sow-thistle. It has been calculated that no less than fifty species have been lost to the flora of Cambridgeshire, and most of them in consequence of the draining of the fens. The same process has naturally produced similar results elsewhere. In the year 1667 John Goodyer, a famous botanist, discovered the marsh Isnardia near the great pond on Petersfield Heath, in Hampshire. This plant is one of our greatest rarities, being only known to exist in one or two localities in Great Britain. Up to the middle of the last century it maintained its position on Petersfield Heath, where, in the summer of 1848, it was seen in considerable plenty by Dr. Bromfield, the author of the *Flora Vectensis*. Since then the marshy spots where it flourished have been drained, and this interesting plant has now entirely disappeared from the historic locality where, in the middle of the seventeenth century, it was first discovered to be a British plant.

Other changes, too, to the detriment of our flora have passed over the face of the country. Not only have bogs been drained, but large tracts of heath and downland have come under the plough, and what was formerly open country is now enclosed and cultivated. The roadside wastes, where in the autumn flocks of goldfinches might be seen feeding on the thistle-seeds, have in many districts been taken in,

and even the hedgerows have been stubbed up and thrown into the fields. The Commons Inclosure Act of 1845 has been inimical alike to the fauna and flora of the country. In parts of Essex the thick hedgerows, beautiful in early summer with honeysuckle and dog-roses, have almost entirely disappeared, and hardly a bank is left for the violet and the primrose and the lesser celandine. Not so many years ago the rare and beautiful Martagon lily might be seen growing plentifully up a green lane, bounded by high banks and old copse-like hedges, in the neighbourhood of Saffron Walden. The banks have now been levelled and the plant is gone.

In some few instances the very beauty of a plant tends to its destruction. The wild daffodil and the wild snowdrop are becoming scarcer every year owing to their eradication for purposes of sale. On some of the Hampshire hangers, where every spring may be seen the truly beautiful sight of

> "A host of golden daffodils
> Fluttering and dancing in the breeze,"

it has become necessary to have a keeper constantly on the watch in order to save the plants from total extinction. In one parish in the Isle of Wight, formerly noted for the abundance of snowdrops to be seen in the copses and hedgerows, the plant has become so scarce that the writer could only find a few small patches last spring. The flowers had been transplanted into gardens, he was told, or sold in the neighbouring town. The same fate has overtaken a colony of that most rare and beautiful plant, the fritillary, or snake's head, which has almost entirely disappeared from a damp meadow where fifty years

ago it was plentiful. Another rare plant which has suffered from the same cause is the fragrant *Daphne mezereum*. This beautiful shrub, which flowers in early spring, often in the month of February, before the leaves appear, used not to be uncommon in the Hampshire woods, especially about Andover and in the neighbourhood of Selborne. In Gilbert White's time it grew on the hanger, "among the shrubs at the S.E. end, above the cottages." In a former parish of the writer's it used often to be found when the underwood was cut. One old woodman remembered having seen as many as thirty or forty plants in a single copse. Though still frequent in cottage gardens, the shrub is now almost extinct in our woods, owing in a great measure, to quote a Hampshire writer of fifty years ago, to "the avidity with which it has been hunted out and dug up for transplanting by the cottagers, either for their own use or for sale to the nurserymen." So, too, with the beautiful *Dianthus cæsius*, or Cheddar pink, which formerly covered the romantic limestone cliffs from which it takes its name. It is now nearly destroyed in this, its only native habitat in Great Britain, through the mercenary habit of digging up the plants for sale to visitors.

And what has happened to many species of our rarer and more beautiful flowering plants has taken place in a still more lamentable degree in the case of our native ferns. All over the country—in Yorkshire, in Wales, in Devonshire, in the home counties—they have been ruthlessly destroyed for purposes of gain. Many of our choicest species are on the verge of extinction from this single cause. Our very hedgerows are being denuded of the commoner but not less beautiful kinds by lazy tramps, who hawk them

around in towns and villages. When, in January 1624, Mr. John Goodyer "rode between Rake and Headley in Hampshire, neere Wollmer Forest," he saw enough maidenhair spleenwort "to lode an horse with"; it is doubtful if a single specimen of the plant could be found to-day. The Tunbridge fern is almost extinct at Tunbridge, and the sea spleenwort in the Isle of Wight. But it is needless to continue the mournful catalogue. The fact is too patent to require illustration. It should, however, be borne in mind that unless persons were found ready to buy the spoil the trade in native plants would quickly cease. The time has surely come when all lovers of Nature and of country life should use every endeavour to preserve what yet remains to us of the flora of Great Britain.

SOME ADDITIONS TO OUR NATIVE FLORA

In our last paper we considered the question of the disappearance of many of our rarer and more interesting wild-flowers. We saw that many circumstances had contributed to this unfortunate result. The growth of towns; improved methods of agriculture, especially in the way of drainage; the enclosing of commons; the stubbing-up of hedgerows; the cultivation of downlands; the rapacity of dealers; the transplanting of showy species, like fritillary and *Daphne mezereum*, into gardens and nurseries—all have had their share in reducing the number of plants in our native flora. While only a few species have, it is true, become wholly extinct in these islands, many have been greatly reduced in numbers, and now only flourish in one or two localities, which in former years were more generally distributed. And this, unfortunately, is the case, not so much with our common plants, although some, as the primrose and the hedgerow ferns, are most grievously persecuted, as with many of our choicer species, which seem to be becoming scarcer every year.

Now while this is beyond question true, yet, on the other hand, it must be borne in mind, especially in these days of democratic progress, that a large number

of foreign plants have established their claim to be admitted within the charmed circle of British plants. The last edition of *The London Catalogue* reckons no less than 1958 species as now growing wild in Great Britain, but this large estimate includes a great number of brambles, wild-roses, willows, and hawkweeds, which can only be distinguished by scientific botanists. Moreover, it comprehends those alien species which have become completely naturalised in these islands, and have settled down permanently side by side with the older flora. It is often difficult—sometimes it is impossible — to absolutely decide whether a given plant be really indigenous or otherwise, so thoroughly have some of these introductions become at home in their new surroundings. Just as it is true of England as a nation that Saxon and Norman and Dane are we, so is it equally true of our flora that it comprises plants of many different types and from many foreign lands.

Some of these introductions date back to a very early period in our history. Several are to be assigned to the time of the Roman occupation, as for instance the Roman nettle, still to be found about towns and villages in the east of England, and probably the saffron crocus, formerly cultivated at Saffron Walden, and occasionally to be met with in a semi-wild state. To a still earlier period, the woad, or *Isatis tinctoria*, probably belongs—the plant of which Pliny tells us, in the quaint translation of Philemon Holland, that "with the juyce whereof the women of Britain, as wel the married wives as yong maidens their daughters, anoint and dy their bodies all over, resembling by that tincture the color of Moores and Ethyopians; in which manner they use at some

solemn feasts and sacrifices to go all naked." This famous plant, doubtless the relic of ancient cultivation, is still to be found in several parts of England, as in the chalk quarries near Guildford, where now, as in 1841 when John Stuart Mill noticed it, it grows in "prodigious luxuriance." Other plants doubtless owe their existence to the old monastic herb-gardens, among which may be mentioned the birthwort, the masterwort, the wild hyssop, and perhaps the wild mercury, formerly used as a pot-herb. The milk or Virgin Mary thistle, the leaves of which are beautifully veined with white, is supposed to have been brought from the East by the Crusaders. The soapwort, though known to Gerarde, who says "it groweth wilde of itselfe neere to rivers and running brooks in sunny places," yet seems to have been an escape from cultivation in gardens where, says our herbalist, "it is planted for the flouer sake, to the decking up of houses, for the which purpose it chiefly serveth." The larkspur again has no claim to be considered a native plant, although in Ray's time "it was to be found in great plenty amongst the corn in Swafham Field in Cambridgeshire."

Many of our mural plants, though now completely naturalised on old walls and ruins throughout the country, cannot be regarded—as indeed their artificial position would lead us to suspect—as indigenous members of our British flora. The wallflower, though known to Gerarde and Ray, and perhaps dating back to the period of Roman occupation, is admitted by all botanists to be an alien species. So with the splendid red valerian, so conspicuous on the grey walls of Winchester Cathedral, of Portchester Castle, and other historic buildings; and the rare *Dianthus plumarius*,

the origin of the garden pinks. The beautiful little ivy-leaved toad-flax, now happily so abundant on walls throughout the country, was only known to Gerarde as a garden plant, and is supposed to have been introduced from Italy. Among other waifs and strays from cultivation must doubtless be reckoned the yellow corydalis, the purple snapdragon, the houseleek, often to be seen on the roofs of cottages, and several kinds of *sedum* or stonecrop. One very rare member of a most plain and uninteresting family, *Senecio squalidus*, now to be found growing on venerable walls at Oxford, is said to have originally escaped from the botanical garden.

Weeds have been well called "the tramps of the vegetable world"; and it is most curious how some plants seem to accompany man in his movements across the globe. The common ribwort plantain is known among the North American Indians as the "white man's foot," because they say it always springs up in places where the colonists have encamped. Sir Joseph Hooker tells us that "on one occasion, landing on a small uninhabited island, nearly at the Antipodes, the first evidence he met with of its having been previously visited by man was the English chickweed; and this he traced to a mound that marked the grave of a British sailor, and that was covered with the plant, doubtless the offspring of seed that had adhered to the spade or mattock with which the grave had been dug." It is well known that numbers of our English wild-flowers are to be found in luxuriant abundance in parts of America. The viper's bugloss has become a troublesome weed in Virginia; the fields along the course of the Hudson river are in some places overrun with the bladder campion, in

others the soapwort known as "Bouncing Bet" grows in extraordinary profusion; while along the streams the beautiful purple loosestrife is abundant.

On the other hand, within comparatively recent times several interesting species have found their way here from America, and have comfortably established themselves. Among these may be mentioned the American wood-sorrel with yellow flowers, and the little white Claytonia, now common in Wolmer Forest, and as thoroughly at home as the English mouse-ear chickweed. In 1822 John Stuart Mill, who delighted in roaming over the country in search of wild-flowers, discovered the American balsam, *Impatiens fulva*, growing abundantly on the banks of the Wey near Guildford. "At whatever period introduced," he says, writing in 1841, "this plant is now so thoroughly naturalised, that it would be pedantry any longer to refuse it a place in the English Flora. For many miles by the side of the Wey, both above and below Guildford, it is as abundant as the commonest river-side plants. It is equally abundant on the banks of the Tillingbourne, that beautiful tributary of the Wey; especially at Chilworth, where it grows in boundless profusion." Since Mill's time the plant has considerably increased, and is now frequently met with along the banks of the Surrey streams. Another North American plant, with ornamental yellow blossoms, now occasionally to be met with, is the *Mimulus*, or monkey-flower. This handsome species is not uncommon in Hampshire, and the writer has met with it near the source of the river Wey at Alton, where it makes a splendid show, and along the course of the Itchen, at Titchborne, Itchen Abbas, Avingdon, Winchester, and elsewhere. Beside the tiny stream

that flows down the picturesque valley of the Lyth at Selborne, a spot specially sacred to the memory of Gilbert White, this plant has now completely established itself in the most luxuriant abundance. In the same district the Canadian fleabane or Michaelmas daisy may now and again be met with on the grassy wastes that border the country lanes; while in the neighbourhood of London it is reported as a fairly common plant.

The career of the Canadian pond-weed (*Anacharis Alsinastrum*, Bab.), is interesting because of the extraordinary rapidity with which it spread itself throughout the country. It seems to have been first noticed in Great Britain in County Down about the year 1836; in 1842 it was reported from Berwick-on-Tweed; in 1847 it was discovered by a Miss Kirby in the Foxton Locks, near Market Harborough, in Leicestershire; in the same year it was found by Mr. Borrer in the pond at Legh Park, near Havant, in Hampshire; two years later it was reported as growing abundantly in the river Trent at Burton-on-Trent, and afterwards at Cambridge; and since then it has rapidly spread through ponds, and canals, and sluggish streams over the whole of Great Britain. Its progress is the more remarkable from the fact that it seldom or never seeds in this country (the male flower having been found in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh only), and seems to propagate itself almost entirely by means of its floating branches. Another American plant which has found its way to England, and has become extraordinarily abundant in one locality, is the many-spiked cordgrass, or *Spartina alterniflora*. This stout and useful grass, which loves the mud-flats and salt creeks of tidal rivers, is common

enough throughout America; but in Europe it is apparently confined to two localities, both in the neighbourhood of seaports having constant communication with the New World—namely, the salt marshes that border the river Adour at Bayonne in France, and on the mud-flats of the Itchen, and similar spots, near Southampton. In the latter locality it is now the most conspicuous plant that flourishes on the long stretches of mud which at low tide line the banks of the Itchen; and the most casual observer can hardly fail to notice it as travelling on the L.S.W. Railway he looks out of the carriage window after passing St. Denys station. The plant seems to have come under the notice of Dr. Bromfield about the year 1836, and he speaks of it as then abundant, but as having become established within the memory of persons then living. "It is regularly cut down," he tells us, "by the poorer classes at Southampton, and employed by them in lieu of straw or reeds for thatching outhouses, cattle-sheds, &c., and more extensively for litter, and subsequently for manure. Horses and pigs," he adds, "eat it greedily; and for all those purposes it is much sought after, so that hardly an accessible patch is suffered to remain uncut by the end of September." Since the learned author of the *Flora Vectensis* penned these words, the plant has considerably increased, and is now to be seen not only on the Itchen, and on both sides of Southampton Water, but also on the banks of the Hamble, and as far as Hill Head at the mouth of the river Meon, which empties itself into the Solent over against the towers of Osborne House.

It is curious how occasionally plants will establish themselves in a locality where formerly they were

entirely unknown. Several striking instances occur in the historic parish of Selborne. We have already referred to the American *Mimulus*, which now almost chokes the little stream that flows down the valley of the Lyth. In the swampy meadow hard by another plant may be seen, which did not figure in the flora of Selborne in the days of Gilbert White. We mean the bistort or snakeweed, conspicuous with its pink flowers in the month of June, and now growing abundantly. In the year 1848 a single specimen of this uncommon plant was noticed by Dr. Bromfield, and duly chronicled in the pages of *The Phytologist;* and from this solitary individual the present colony has doubtless sprung. Further down the valley, on a warm slope facing south, there may be seen in the early days of spring large numbers of the common snowdrop. Had the plants existed in White's time he would undoubtedly have mentioned them in his famous botanical letter to Daines Barrington, in which he enumerates "the more rare plants of the parish, and the spots where they may be found"; but there they are to-day in luxuriant profusion, a beautiful addition to the local flora.

A practice that is not to be commended, but which has occasionally been followed even by distinguished naturalists, is sometimes answerable for the existence of strange plants in unwonted places. We refer to the habit of scattering the seeds of rare or interesting wild-flowers in localities where the species had not before been known to exist. No less an authority than Gilbert White was once guilty of this misdemeanour. "I wish," he wrote to his "dear niece Anne," "that we could say that we had ye *Parnassia;* I have sowed seeds in our bogs several times, but to no

purpose." This beautiful plant, common in the north of England, and also to be found in the neighbouring counties of Wilts, Dorset, Surrey, and Berks, is unknown in Hampshire; but it is an interesting fact, that the late Lord Chancellor Selborne once told the writer that about the year 1870 he had found a specimen of *Parnassia* in the bogs of Oakhanger, which in White's time formed part of the parish of Selborne. It is not impossible that Gilbert White was more successful than he imagined, and that Lord Selborne's plant was a descendant of the seed scattered by the great naturalist a hundred years before. Another instance of a similar attempt to assist Nature occurred in 1848, when the distinguished author of the *Flora Vectensis* planted some roots of the handsome sea spurge in the loose sand of St. Helen's spit in the Isle of Wight. Till then this beautiful plant, though abundant on the other side of the Solent, had been unknown in the island, but Dr. Bromfield's plants flourished and established themselves; and now *Euphorbia paralias* is one of the most conspicuous species to be seen growing on the sandy shore of Bembridge Harbour. Once again, when last autumn the writer visited the historic ruins of Colchester Castle, he was surprised to find on the crumbling walls of the ancient Norman keep a number of specimens of *Silene Otites*, or the Spanish catch-fly. The plant, though found in Suffolk, was not known to exist in Essex; but there, all along the broken masonry at the top of the tower, it was growing abundantly. It turned out, however, upon inquiry, that some few years ago certain local entomologists introduced the plant in order to furnish food for their caterpillars. It has now settled comfortably in its

new surroundings, and it is not impossible that in years to come, when all memory of its introduction is forgotten, the species will be included in the list of plants indigenous to the county. Another interesting plant, not figuring in the Essex flora, but whose presence was not to be attributed to the agency of man, was accidentally lighted upon by the writer some ten or twelve miles from the castle walls. Riding along on his bicycle near the edge of the low-lying cliff that overlooks the picturesque estuary of the Colne and the wooded shore of Mersea Isle, he got off his machine to admire more at ease the calm beauty of the scene, when there at his feet, with the tire of the back-wheel actually resting upon it, was a beautiful patch of *Vicia lutea*, the single-flowered yellow vetch. He had never seen the living plant before, and the vision brought with it a surprise and pleasure not soon to be forgotten.

THE FLORA OF HANTS

SOME twenty years ago a *Flora of Hampshire*, including the Isle of Wight, was brought out by Mr. Frederick Townsend, assisted by several well-known botanists. A new edition of this work has lately appeared, giving a more complete record of the plants of the county, with regard both to species and to localities. Of new species there are upwards of fifty now given, among the most interesting of which are the adder's-tongue-leaved spearwort, the coral root, the beech fern, and the yellow star of Bethlehem; while the number of localities of the rarer species is greatly multiplied. "It is sad to think," says Mr. Townsend in the Preface, "that our native flora is suffering much, even to the extinction of species, by building and enclosures in the neighbourhood of our larger towns, whereby the localities of many plants have been lost entirely. Marshes have also been extensively drained, and much land laid out in pleasure gardens, market gardens, and for recreation purposes. It is the recognition of such facts which renders the existence of local floras doubly valuable, not only as catalogues and guides to existing localities, but as records of the disappearance of many of our native plants, the history of which would be lost to science were it not for the existence of works like the present." We further hope that the appearance of this

second edition is some evidence of a growing interest in botany, perhaps of all outdoor pursuits the most delightful, and one open to rich and poor persons alike who have the good fortune to live in the country.

That the flora of Hampshire is an exceedingly rich one will be evident at once, when we say that Mr. Townsend claims for the county no less than 1179 species of flowering plants. Or if we compare the flora of Hampshire with those of the adjoining counties, we learn from the comparative tables drawn up by the editor, that while Surrey possesses 61 plants not found in Hants, Dorset 45, Berkshire 31, and Wiltshire 25, yet, on the other hand, Hampshire possesses no less than 196 plants not found in Wiltshire, 166 plants not found in Berkshire, 120 plants not found in Surrey, and 66 plants not found in Dorset. And this comparative wealth is no doubt to be accounted for by the varied nature of Hampshire soil and scenery, and the large extent of its acreage. Hampshire ranks as the eighth English county in respect of size, stretching from Surrey to Dorset, a distance of over forty miles, and from Berkshire to the English Channel, a distance of some fifty-five miles, and comprising with the Isle of Wight an area of about one million acres, of which, roughly speaking, one-half consists of chalk and the other of the various tertiary formations. While Hampshire cannot boast of any mountain range, yet, as Mr. Townsend says, there are few counties in which there is more varied and picturesque scenery of a truly English character. Its highest hills are the well-known North and South Downs—spoken of by Gilbert White as a "vast range of mountains"—drawn in soft and flowing lines, and clothed with

short, smooth turf, on which the shadows fall unbroken. These downs, of which the loftiest are Combe Hill, in the north of the county, and Butser Hill, near Petersfield, support a flora of their own, which is specially rich in species of the orchid family. Hampshire, again, according to the testimony of old Izaak Walton, "exceeds all England for swift, shallow, clear, pleasant brooks, and store of trouts," of which the principal are the Avon, the Test, and the Itchen. There are, however, numerous smaller streams, such as the Loddon, the Hamble, the Meon, and the Wey, on the banks of which characteristic plants will be found. There are also large stretches of waste and forest land, the home of many rare and interesting species. The New Forest especially is favourite ground to the botanist. It still consists of nearly one hundred thousand acres, and its vast tracts of open heath and bog produce some of our choicest English plants. Among these must be specially mentioned *Isnardia palustris*, now to be found nowhere else in England; the delicate orchid *Spiranthes æstivalis*, or summer Lady's Tresses, found only here and in Wyre Forest, in Worcestershire; and the elegant *Gladiolus illyricus*, which is not uncommon in one or two localities. In the enclosed parts of the forest the wild columbine and the beautiful bastard balm are sometimes seen; while the woods about Beaulieu and Boldre produce in abundance the narrow-leaved lungwort or blue cowslip, called by the forest children "Joseph and Mary." It is interesting to notice in the new edition of our flora that the larger long-leaved sundew (*Drosera anglica*, Huds.) has been found abundantly of late years in several of the forest bogs.

In addition to the New Forest, Hampshire possesses several other large tracts of forest and moorland, the happy hunting-grounds of many naturalists. The Forest of Bere, to the north of Portsdown Hill, still includes some eleven thousand acres, in one spot of which, known perhaps only to the writer, the beautiful snowflake may be seen in blossom every spring. In Gilbert White's time, "the royal forest of Wolmer extended," he tells us, "for about seven miles in length by two and a half in breadth, and consisted entirely of sand covered with heath and fern, without having one standing tree in the whole extent." Since then, part of the forest has been enclosed and planted with oak, larch, and Scotch fir, which has considerably curtailed its former dimensions. Abutting on Wolmer, the Forest of Alice Holt still covers over two thousand acres; and Harewood Forest, near Andover in the north of the county, is about the same extent. Waltham Chase, the haunt, in the early years of the eighteenth century, of a famous gang of poachers known as the "Waltham Blacks," is now enclosed, and broad acres of strawberries and fruit-trees now flourish where once the wild deer roamed. The county, too, is further enriched with a large "littoral" flora, which adds considerably to the number of its species. Not to include the coast of the Isle of Wight—for in this paper we are mainly concerned with the plants of the mainland of Hampshire—the sea-board stretches from Emsworth to Bournemouth, embracing the sandy shores of Hayling Island, where many a rare plant is to be found; the muddy creeks of Portsmouth Harbour, where, on the sea-banks, especially in the neighbourhood of Portchester, the golden samphire will be seen; the low-lying cliffs of Hillhead and Lea-on-the-Solent, and

again, beyond the New Forest, the long reaches of mudland on each side of Southampton Water, covered with the stout American cord-grass, unknown elsewhere in England.

When these varied conditions of soil and situation are considered, the large total of 1179 species now recorded for Hampshire is less remarkable. It will not, of course, be claimed that all these plants are indigenous to the county. Many have doubtless been introduced by human agency. Mr. Townsend gives a most interesting list of 258 species, "some of which," he says, "have certainly, and others possibly, been introduced from other counties." The greater number have been long naturalised, and are as common, and in some cases commoner, than many native species. Among these plants of ancient introduction we may mention, as interesting examples, such species as wall-flower and the red-spur valerian. Others are known to follow the culture of cereals throughout the globe, as the yellow charlock, the corn pansy, and the scarlet poppy. Others, again, are of more recent introduction, having found their way over from America and other parts in ships and merchandise, or mixed with foreign corn.

It is again possible that in some instances, though not, we believe, in many, plants recorded for the county in former years are no longer to be found in Hampshire. This may be due to the species having become extinct within the bounds of the county, or to some mistake in identification or locality. Thus the rare Alpine enchanter's nightshade, a plant we should not expect to find in a southern county, is reported to have been once discovered "at Nested, in shady, rocky lanes a mile from Petersfield south." But the specimen

which is fortunately preserved in Sherard's Herbarium at Oxford turns out to be, as we learn from the new edition of our flora, not *Circæa alpina*, but *C. Lutetiana*, the common enchanter's nightshade. In the year 1841, John Stuart Mill reported the grass of Parnassus as growing "in various parts of the New Forest." This plant has not been found there by other botanists. Can it have disappeared, or, as Mr. Townsend suggests, did Mr. Mill visit the Forest before it was in flower and mistake the leaves of *Valeriana dioica* for those of *Parnassia palustris?* In some few instances rare species have no doubt become extinct within the limits of our flora. The "lesser Burre Docke" has disappeared, but John Ray tells us he "once found it on the road from Portsmouth to London, some three miles from Portsmouth." The rare mountain Tway-blade, recorded for "near Bournemouth in 1853," has not been seen since then. Several other choice orchids must also, we fear, be regarded as lost to the county. The lizard orchis is now, we notice, placed by Mr. Townsend among the excluded species. The early spider orchis has not been found for many years; and the green man orchis (*Aceras anthropophora*, R. Br.), reported to grow on Nore Hill, near Selborne, has been repeatedly searched for in vain.

Still, with comparatively few exceptions, the 1179 species of British plants now recognised as forming the flora of Hants may be seen growing at the right season in their respective localities. A certain number, as we have noticed, have beyond question been introduced by human agency, yet the great majority may be regarded as indigenous to the county, and though only identified and recorded in modern times, have doubtless flourished in their present haunts for untold

centuries. When prehistoric man reared his barrows or tumuli over the remains of his distinguished dead, there is no reason to doubt that then, as now, the frog-orchis blossomed on Old Winchester Hill, and the autumnal gentian was abundant on Crawley Down. When the Druid priest, clothed in white raiment and bearing a golden sickle, went forth to cut the mistletoe, the *Selago* flourished on the heath, and the *Samolus* by the running stream. When the Romans made their straight road from Portchester to Winchester, through the dense forest of Anderida, the dogwood and the spindle tree fell before their axes, and the wild daffodil was trampled under their feet. When the black boats of the Northmen made their way up the Hamble River, the marsh sapphire covered the muddy banks, and the sea holly blossomed on the shore. Unnoticed and uncared for, the wild flowers, then as now, each in their own season throughout the changing year, "wasted their sweetness on the desert air." As time went on, a knowledge of simples began to be cultivated, and more than one Saxon herbal has been preserved; but we wait for long centuries before any real record of native plants is met with. It is not, indeed, before the revival of learning in the sixteenth century that the true history of our flora can be said to begin. In the year 1551, the first part of Dr. William Turner's *Herbal* appeared, and it is in this work that we find the earliest information with regard to the localities of British plants. It will, therefore, be seen that our flora, as we now possess it, from a literary and historic standpoint, is the result of botanical observation during the last three hundred and fifty years.

The "first records" of British plants are naturally

of considerable interest, and it is most fascinating work searching in old localities for rare species mentioned by our early botanists. The *Herbal* of Dr. Turner, Dean of Wells, enumerates upwards of three hundred plants, together with the localities of the rarer species. These localities are, however, mainly in the county of Northumberland, where he was brought up; about Cambridge, where he was educated; in the neighbourhood of Dover, which he visited on his way to the Continent; and about Wells, in Somerset. But one plant only, we believe, is mentioned as growing in Hampshire, and this entry is the earliest record of any particular species found in the county. It occurs in the second part of the *Herbal*, published in 1562, and runs as follows: "Rubia [*i.e.* the wild madder] groweth in Germany and also in Englande. And the moste that ever I sawe is in the Yle of Wyght. But the farest and gretest that ewer I sawe groweth in the lane besyde Wynchestre in the way to Southampton." After this solitary but interesting record we pass to the well-known *Herbal* of "Master John Gerarde," published in 1597, before meeting with any further information with regard to Hampshire plants. In this work, again, but few Hampshire localities are mentioned, but among them we find the "English scurvie-grasse or spoonwort" and the mugwort recorded as growing "at Portsmouth," Solomon's seal "in Odiham Parke," and the lady's mantle, or "lion's foote," as Gerarde calls it, "in the towne pastures by Andover." At the time, however, of the publication of this work, interest in British botany was thoroughly awakened, and with the beginning of the seventeenth century we find several competent observers busily engaged in search-

ing after and noting Hampshire plants. To this period belong the labours of Matthias de l'Obel, of John Parkinson, and of Thomas Johnson, the learned editor of Gerarde's *Herbal*, which he greatly enlarged and improved, and which contains many new records of Hampshire plants. This distinguished botanist, who is said to have been "no less eminent in the garrison for his valour and conduct as a soldier than famous through the kingdom for his excellency as a herbalist and physician," unfortunately lost his life in the historic siege of Basing House, in the north of the county. We are told that, "going with a party on September 14, 1644, to succour certain of the forces belonging to that house, which went to the town of Basing to fetch provisions thence, but, beaten back by the enemy, headed by that notorious rebel, Colonel Richard Norton, he received a shot in the shoulder, of which he died in a fortnight after."

Of other early botanists connected with Hampshire in the first half of the seventeenth century, two names deserve special mention, namely, Mr. John Goodyer and Dr. Robert Turner, for they first discovered and put on record many rare species of British plants. Mr. John Goodyer, who seems to have been a person of considerable means, and to have devoted his life to the study of botany, lived at Maple Durham, a fine old Tudor mansion, now, alas! destroyed, in the parish of Buriton, some two miles from Petersfield. We learn from the Preface to Johnson's edition of Gerarde's *Herbal*, published in 1633, that Goodyer largely contributed to that work; and, moreover, his observations and discoveries are so printed "as they may be distinguished from the rest." Some years later, when Merrett was preparing his *Pinax*, the botanical manu-

scripts of Goodyer were placed in his hands, and it is from this work, and from Johnson's edition of Gerarde, that we are enabled to estimate our indebtedness to this keen and energetic botanist. Among the Hampshire plants first recorded by Goodyer, many of which still flourish in their old localities, may be mentioned the marsh mallow, which grew "plentifully in a close called Aldercrofts, near Maple Durham"; the rare round-headed rampion, which flourished then, as now, on several of the downs near Petersfield; the narrow-leaved lungwort, which he found, on "May 25, Anno 1620, flowering in a wood by Holbury House in the New Forest in Hampshire"; the maidenhair spleenwort, of which, "in January 1624, he saw enough to lode an horse growing on the banks in a lane as he rode between Rake and Headley, neere Wollmer Forest"; and the Marsh Isnardia, which he discovered in "a great ditch near the moor at Petersfield."

Robert Turner, who belonged to the astrological herbalists, published, in 1664, a work he called *Botanologia*, in which he described "the Nature and Vertues of English Plants," with "the places where they flourish." Many of these places are in the neighbourhood of Holshot, in the north of the county, where his father had an estate, and where he was doubtless brought up. About his old home Turner found many new and interesting plants which he duly records in his *Herbal*. The wild columbine, "both the white and the purple, grow wilde," he tells us, "in our meadows where the ground is somewhat dry, as in a place called Gassenmead, in Holshot." In his "father's grounds" the wild broom was plentiful, and the couch-grass, we learn, much infected the garden. "In moist, boggy ditches, as in

the ditch near the well in Holshot Lane," the Royal osmunda fern grew, and the little adder's-tongue in the meadow beyond. In "Danemoor Wood" he notes the buckthorn; and in the "Mead" adjoining, the devil's-bit scabious and the early purple orchis. Figwort grew by Holshot Bridge; and the white water-lily, "very plentifully in Holshot River in Hampshire, my native soil, all along the river by Danmore Mead." One most interesting plant, first recorded by Turner as a Hampshire species, he found some twenty miles from Holshot. "I have seen," he says, "the Dwale or Deadly nightshade growing in a ditch by the highway side near Alton, in Hampshire."

After the death of Mr. John Goodyer in 1652, and the publication of Turner's *Botanologia* in 1664, a long period of comparative silence falls on the story of Hampshire botany. We meet, it is true, with notices of Hampshire localities and species in the writings of Merrett and of John Ray, but these statements are mostly dependent on the discoveries of de l'Obel and Goodyer. In the year 1778, however, we meet with the famous letter of Gilbert White to Daines Barrington, in which he gives what he calls a "short list of the more rare plants of Selborne and the spots where they are to be found"—a list which has already been considered in a separate paper. One more authority belonging to the eighteenth century must be mentioned. In the *Annual Hampshire Repository* for 1799, there appeared what the writer calls "the commencement only of a Hampshire flora, confined at present to some of the rarer plants, hereafter to be continued, and to be finally extended to a complete flora Hantoniensis." This paper, which was published anonymously, proved to

be the work of Thomas Garnier, of Rooksbury Park, afterwards Dean of Winchester, assisted by the Rev. E. Poulter, and deals largely, as we should expect, with the plants of the Meon Valley, and those to be found in the south of Hampshire. Unfortunately the intention of continuing the flora was never carried out, but the single catalogue that we possess is valuable as recording for the first time many species indigenous to the county. Among these we select for special mention the meadow rue, still growing where Garnier found it, near Droxford Mill; the beautiful corn-field weed *Adonis autumnalis* or pheasant's eye, which has maintained its position on the same farm since its first discovery; the sea-kale, abundant at Calshot Spit; and many of our Hampshire orchids, including the pyramidal orchis, the dwarf or burnt orchis, the fragrant orchis, the fly orchis, and the musk orchis now, as then, plentiful on the same down. A fine plate is given of what is called "a new discovered variety" of the bee orchis with white instead of pink sepals. It is interesting to know that a good many plants of this white variety of *Ophrys apifera* flowered last summer on the very spot where Garnier first met with it over a hundred years ago.

During the last century a number of able botanists, including Dr. Bromfield, the author of the *Flora Vectensis*, have continued the work of Gerarde and de l'Obel, of Goodyer and Turner, of Gilbert White and Dean Garnier. The county has been well searched in all directions, and a great many new plants, unknown to the early botanists, have been added to their discoveries, with the gratifying result that the new edition of the *Flora of Hampshire* is perhaps the most complete county flora in existence.

ESSEX AND THE EARLY BOTANISTS

It is sometimes asserted that Essex is a dull county, and offers but few attractions to the lover of nature. And in comparison with many parts of England it will, of course, be admitted that the scenery is tame and commonplace. Essex can boast of no hill of a higher elevation than four hundred feet above the level of the sea; its rivers—the Blackwater, the Chelmer, the Colne, and the Roding are, it is true, the reverse of rushing torrents; while its forests, which in Norman times stretched from the Thames to the Stour, have almost entirely disappeared. Except towards Walton and Harwich the coast is remarkably flat, and bordered with vast stretches of salterns and marshland reclaimed from the sea. The soil, too, is mostly of the same geological formation, belonging to that known as the London clay; and though the chalk crops up here and there in the north of the county, yet there are no elevated downs, such as give charm and character to the scenery of Sussex and Hampshire. The county is, in short, mainly an agricultural one, devoted chiefly to wheat and barley growing, with but little grazing land except in the marshes, and mapped out into interminable corn-fields, divided by elms and hedgerows.

And yet to the naturalist and archæologist the county is far from unattractive. There is a quiet charm about it which those only who have lived in it can fully appreciate. Colchester alone, not to mention the ancient parish churches, the ruined priories, the mediæval halls and manor-houses, will suffice to render the county dear to the lover of antiquity. The number of sea-fowl, which still haunt the estuaries and the salt-marshes, is an unfailing source of interest to the ornithologist; while to the botanist the flora of Essex is one of peculiar fascination. This is due not only to the number of species to which it can lay claim, but also, and chiefly, to the fact of its intimate association with the early botanists and herbalists.

English botany, as we have already observed, may be said to begin with Dr. William Turner, who was Dean of Wells in the reign of Edward VI., and who published the first edition of his *Herbal* in the year 1551. In this herbal, which is now a very scarce book, he describes upwards of three hundred British species; and in many instances he gives the exact localities in which he had found the plants growing. These entries are the earliest records of the kind in English literature, and are therefore of exceptional interest to the lover of country life. Essex, however, was not one of the counties best known to "Master Dr. Turner." He states, however, that mistletoe and the butcher's broom are to be found in Essex, and of one rare plant he gives the exact locality. The green hellebore, or "Syterwurt," grows, he says, "in greate plentye in a parke besyde Colchester"; and this, it is interesting to remember, is the earliest record of the locality of a native plant in the Essex flora. Whether it is still to be found in Turner's habitat

seems doubtful; but the plant flourishes in several localities in the county, and may be seen in some abundance in a small spinney not far from the village of Roxwell, once the residence of the poet Quarles, and where he prepared his *Emblems* for publication.

Some thirty years after the death of Dr. Turner Gerarde's famous *Herbal* appeared. The first edition, dedicated to his "singular good Lord and Master" Sir William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer of England, was published in 1597, and it is to this quaint and curious book that the botanist must go in order to discover—with the few exceptions already mentioned—the earliest localities of Essex plants. This engaging work, which is "the parent of all succeeding books which bear the name of herbal," will ever be of peculiar interest to the botanist. Though in the main a translation of Dodonæus's *Pemptades*, it yet contains a large amount of original matter, such as the localities of rare plants, and many quaint allusions to places and persons now of considerable antiquarian interest. Gerarde, who occupied the position of "herbarist" to James I., had a large physic-garden at Holborn, one of the first of its kind in England, where he cultivated, we are told, "near eleven hundred sorts of plants"; he also appears to have made frequent expeditions into various parts of the country, on what were then termed "simpling-voyages," with a view of enlarging his knowledge of British plants, and of marking the localities of the rarer species.

Now Essex being nigh unto Holborn, this good "Master in Chirurgerie," in company with other friends "skillful in herbary," made many excursions into the county. From the entries scattered up and down the sixteen hundred folio pages of his *Herbal*

it would appear that he was well acquainted with the district north of the Thames, from Ilford to Leigh; he was also familiar with Mersea Isle, and the salt-marshes about Walton and Dovercourt; while inland we find him at Chelmsford and Colchester, in the neighbourhood of Dunmow and Braintree, and further north at Pebmarsh and Castle Hedingham. It is most interesting to note the plants which attracted the attention of the old herbalist as he went on his "simpling-voyages" about the county. Over seventy species he mentions as occurring in Essex; some, as the wild clematis, the saw-wort, and the butcher's broom, as found "in divers places"; others, with exact reference to the spots where they may be found. The curious mousetail, so called because of the arrangement of its carpels "resembling very notably the taile of a mouse," he found "in Woodford Row, in Waltham Forrest, and in the orchard belonging to Mr. Francis Whetstone in Essex." The Burnet or Scotch rose he notes as growing "very plentifully in a field as you go from a village in Essex called Graies (upon the brinke of the river Thames) unto Horndon on the hill, insomuch that the field is full fraught therewith all over." "Upon the church walls of Railey" the little wall-rue fern (*Asplenium Ruta-muraria*, L.) was abundant in Gerarde's days; and in "a wood hard by a gentleman's house called Mr. Leonard, dwelling upon Dawes heath," the golden rod was in flower, and the tutsan or parke-leaves, "out of which is pressed a juice, not like blacke bloud, but Claret or Gascoigne wine." "Neere to Lee in Essex," over against Canvey Island, our herbalist found the lily of the valley, and in the woods thereabouts the yellow dead-nettle; while "in the greene places by the sea side at Lee among the

TITLE-PAGE OF GERARD'S "HERBAL"

rushes and in sundry other places thereabouts" the beautiful meadow saxifrage grew then, as now, abundantly. On the sea-shore and in the salt-marshes which here stretch away for many a mile he noticed a number of maritime plants, such as the marsh mallow, the sea lavender, and the sea spurge.

On his herbarising expeditions inland Gerarde came across many interesting species, some of them never before recorded as British plants, others already noticed by "that excellent, painefull and diligent Physition Mr. Doctor Turner of late memorie in his Herbal." In many parts of Essex he found the curious herb-paris, with its "foure leaves set directly one against another in manner of a Burgundian crosse or True-love knot," in Chalkney Wood, "neare to wakes Coulne seven miles from Colchester," in the parsonage orchard at Radwinter, in Bocking parke by Braintree. In the latter neighbourhood he noticed the small teasel, then apparently a rare plant, for he adds that he never found it "in any other place except here and there a plant upon the highway from Much-Dunmow to London." In the same district, and perhaps on the same occasion, he lighted upon a plant which he calls *Gentiana minor cruciata*, or "Crossewoort Gentian," growing "in a pasture at the west end of Little Rayne on the North side of the way leading from Braintree to Much-Dunmow and in the horse way by the same close." This entry is of unusual interest, not simply on account of the precise manner in which Gerarde particularises the locality, but also because of the difficulty in identifying his species. For what is now known as the crosswort gentian is not a British plant, and Gerarde's record has never been confirmed. At the same time it may be taken as beyond question that

at the spot indicated he found a plant which he considered worthy of notice and which he took to be an unusual form of gentian. Many explanations of the difficulty have been offered. It is the writer's belief that the plant was *Gentiana Amarella*, L., the autumn gentian. At any rate, when searching for simples at "little Rayne," and bearing in mind the entry in the old *Herbal*, he once came across, in a green lane or "horse-way," not far from, if not actually identical with, Gerarde's locality, a small but flourishing colony of this pretty plant. Now the autumn gentian is very rarely met with in this part of Essex, but there, on one spot in the grassy lane, beneath the tall and overhanging hedgerow—for the lane is no longer used even as a "horse-way"—were clustered together some twenty or thirty plants. It is not impossible that these were the descendants of the gentian with "flowres of a light blue colour," which attracted the notice of Gerarde in the sixteenth century. Continuing his journey along Rayne "Street," as the road through the village is still termed, recalling the fact that here the Roman-way once ran, our herbalist in due course arrived at Much-Dunmow, then, as now, famous for a curious custom, "that whoever did not repent of his marriage, nor quarrell'd with his wife within a year and a day, should go to Dunmow and have a gamon of Bacon. But the Party was to *swear* to the truth of it, kneeling upon two hard-pointed stones set in the Priory Churchyard for that purpose, before the Prior and Convent and the whole Town." But this, as old Camden says, by the way. In the woods thereabouts several interesting plants were to be found. Gerarde noticed two species of orchids, the common tway-blade, and what he calls the "wilde

white Hellebor" or helleborine. He also met with the rare liquorice vetch, which he terms the liquorice hatchet fetch, "the leaves whereof hath the taste of Liquorice root"; and this, he adds, he also found in other parts of Essex, as "in the townes called Clare and Henningham." A few years later, the distinguished botanist, Thomas Johnson, who published an enlarged edition of Gerarde's *Herbal*, found this plant at Purfleet, "about the foot of the hill whereon the winde-mill stands."

But a greater name than that of Gerarde is associated with the flora of the county. We refer to the illustrious John Ray, the foremost naturalist of his age, and the founder of modern scientific botany. He was born at Black Notley, near Braintree, some twelve years after the death of Gerarde. The entry of his baptism may still be made out in the church register stained brown with age, and runs in almost illegible writing: "John son of Roger and Eliz. Wray bapt. June 29, 1628." In later life John Ray (as he came afterwards to spell his name) returned to his native village and built himself a house "on Dewlands," where he died in the year 1705. A melancholy interest attaches to this house on Dewlands, which was standing till recently in almost exactly the same condition as when Ray lived and died there. During the afternoon of Wednesday, September 19, 1900, it was swiftly and totally destroyed by fire. Its disappearance will be deeply regretted by all botanists. Black Notley has been well called the Mecca of Essex naturalists, and now its main object of interest is gone. Ray's stately tomb, a pyramidal monument some ten feet in height and bearing a lengthy Latin inscription, may still be visited in the churchyard, but

the old house in which the great naturalist lived for five-and-twenty years is now only a memory. There was nothing in its outward appearance specially to distinguish it from other farmhouses in the neighbourhood. A long, low, narrow building, made of lath and plaster set in oaken frames, the great red brick chimney-stack standing against the south wall was the chief indication of its age. The old seventeenth century lattice-windows had been removed from the front side of the house some years ago, and this to a certain extent had modernised the appearance of the building. But inside the arrangement of the house was most characteristic of its builder. Cupboards were to be met with in every conceivable situation, in the parlours and bedrooms, on the landings and under the stairs, some as large as pantries, others only a few feet square with small openings in the walls of the passages and rooms. These cupboards were doubtless contrived by the illustrious naturalist with a view to the safe custody of his botanical and zoological specimens. The woodwork of the cottage was entirely of oak, massive oak doors and doorways, wide planks of oak flooring, black beams of oak across the low ceilings. Ray's study was upstairs, situated at the back of the house, over the scullery where the fatal fire broke out, and looking across the garden towards the west. This seems to have been the one warm room of the house, which Ray speaks of in one of his letters as "exposed to the north and north-east winds," and as "inconvenient to one who is subject to colds and whose lungs are apt to be affected." And that unpretending chamber, with its sloping ceilings, its wide oaken boards, its ancient lattice windows, was haunted by the most interesting associations. There

DEWLANDS

(Burnt down September 19th, 1911)

the illustrious naturalist accomplished what Linnæus rightly called "his immense labours"; there he examined and arranged his specimens; there he received his scientific friends; there he wrote his numerous works, including the *Synopsis* of British plants, which may fairly be regarded as the foundation of every succeeding English flora.

During his residence at Notley Ray was fortunate in the intimate friendship of his disciple and near neighbour, Samuel Dale, an apothecary of Braintree and a botanist of very considerable attainments. The two friends worked in the closest harmony at their favourite pursuit; and to Dr. Dale Ray was indebted for many of the localities of Essex plants mentioned in his *Synopsis*. Other distinguished men of science, like Sir Hans Sloane, and Compton, Bishop of London, sometimes visited the great naturalist; and in 1699 we find Mr. Petiver and the Rev. Adam Buddle, afterwards vicar of North Fambridge, near Maldon, at Black Notley. Buddle was the great authority on grasses and mosses; and his herbarium, now in the South Kensington Museum, is, with Dr. Dale's, among the earliest collections of British plants in existence. Most fascinating is the task of examining these early specimens, still in a state of excellent preservation, and labelled with the utmost care and accuracy. In Buddle's collection it is interesting to find a plant of the broad-leaved spurge (*Euphorbia platyphylla*, Koch.), gathered by Dr. Dale in "Ray's orchard at Black Notley." Of this uncommon plant Ray makes the following note: "It grows spontaneously in mine own Orchard here, coming up yearly of its own sowing, for it is an annual plant."

Very interesting, too, is a walk about the parish of

Black Notley, the general features of which have but little changed since Ray lived there. The mediæval church with its low shingle-spire; the churchyard surrounded by rugged elms; the blacksmith's forge; the wayside inn; the osier-bed where Ray found "the Almone-leaved Willow that casts its bark"; the ponds at the Hall where, as in the seventeenth century, the great cat's-tail grows; the little stream below Dewlands, still full of watercress as when the aged naturalist gathered it, together with brooklime and plantain, to make a "diet-drink" for the benefit of his broken health; the grass lane towards the ancient Priory down which he loved to wander—all may be visited; the very plants in the hedgerows remain, with a few exceptions, the same as in the seventeenth century. Butcher's broom may still be noticed in the thick tangled hedges of "Leez Lane," and the linden tree "called hereabouts Pry," and herb-paris in a copse hard by; but the writer failed to find "the wild Garlick in a field called Westfield adjoining to Leez Lane," and the musk-orchis "in the greens of a field belonging to the hall called Wair-field." Here and there on the roadside wastes the beautiful crimson grass vetchling will attract notice; and the "Stinking Gladdon or Gladwyn" (*Iris fœtidissima*, L.) is abundant "in the Hedges by the Road, not far from the Parsonage towards Braintree"; but unfortunately the wild black currant, or "squinancy-berries," so called because of its use in cases of quinsey and sore throat, has disappeared from its ancient habitat "by the river-side near the bridge called the Hoppet-bridge." Another interesting plant which Ray came across in the neighbourhood of Notley was the London Rocket, which, as he says, "after the great Fire of London, in the years

1667–68, came up abundantly among the rubbish in the Ruines." This he found a few years later, some five miles from Dewlands, on the way to Witham, "about the house of his honoured friend, Edward Bullock, Esqre., at Faulkbourn Hall." From the sporadic nature of this rare plant it is not surprising that it has now entirely disappeared, but the record is an interesting one.

Ray tells us that in his day the *Crocus sativus*, or saffron, was cultivated in the fields about Walden, thence denominated Saffron Walden. "Of the culture whereof," he adds, "I shall say nothing, referring the reader to what is written by Camden." Turning to Camden's *Britannia* we find the passage of sufficient interest to quote in full. "The fields all about," he says, "look very pleasant with saffron. For in the month of July every third year, when the roots have been taken up, and after twenty days put under the turf again, about the end of September they shoot forth a bluish flower, out of the midst whereof hang three yellow chives of saffron, which are gathered in the morning before sunrise, and being taken out of the flower are dried by a gentle fire. And so wonderful is the increase, that from every acre of ground they gather eighty or an hundred pounds of wet saffron, which, when it is dry, makes about twenty pounds. And what is more to be admired, that ground that hath born saffron three years together, will bear Barley very plentifully eighteen years without dunging, and then will bear Saffron again." The origin of the cultivation of saffron in England is unknown. It is commonly said, and the statement is repeated by one writer after another, that it was introduced by one Sir Thomas Smith into the neighbourhood of Walden

in the time of Edward III. Old Hakluyt, writing in 1582, says, "It is reported at Saffron Walden that a pilgrim, proposing to do good to his countrey, stole a head of Saffron, and hid the same in his Palmer's staffe, which he had made hollow before of purpose, and so he brought the root into this realme with venture of his life, for if he had bene taken, by the law of the countrey from whence it came, he had died for the fact." It is evident from this story that even in the sixteenth century saffron had been so long cultivated at Walden that the true history of its introduction had been lost; and perhaps the theory of Cole in his *Adam in Eden*, published in 1657, may not be so very far wrong when he suggested that for this plant, as for so many others, we are indebted to the Romans. The cultivation of saffron "about Walden and other places thereabouts, as corne in the fields," has long since ceased; but even now, in certain seasons, a few plants will occasionally appear. This discontinuance is the more to be regretted if we may believe our old friend Gerarde, that "the moderate use thereof is good for the head, and maketh the sences move quicke and lively, shaketh off heavy and drowsie sleepe, and maketh a man merry."

Here and there, along the roadside wastes, which of late years have been considerably curtailed, some rare and interesting plants may occasionally be met with. As Gerarde rode along "Colchester highway from Londonward" he noticed "very plentifully by the wayes side between Esterford and Wittam" the small "greene-leaved Hounds' Tongue." Now Esterford was the mediæval name of the parish of Kelvedon; and there, one hundred years later, "on the London road between Kelvedon and Witham, but more plenti-

fully about Braxted by the wayes-side," John Ray noticed the same species. It is a rare plant with dull purple flowers, and but seldom met with in Essex; but until quite recently, and perhaps even now, a few specimens might be found in their ancient habitat. Another local plant which attracted the notice of Ray "on the banks by the High-wayside, as you go up the hill from Lexden to Colchester," was the smooth-tower mustard, and one is glad to know that this very uncommon plant is still occasionally seen in its old locality.

In Essex, as in many other parts of England, ferns seem to have become scarcer of late years, far scarcer, at any rate, than when Gerarde noticed the wall-rue "upon the church-walls of Railey," and found the adder's tongue "in the fields in Waltham Forest." The noble royal or flowering-fern grew, he tells us, "upon divers bogges on a heath or a common neere unto Brentwood, especially neere unto a place there that some have digged, to the end to finde a nest or mine of gold, but the birds were over fledge and flowne away before their wings could be clipped." He even found the rare moonwort—never since observed in Essex—"in the ruines of an old bricke-kilne by Colchester, in the ground of Mr. George Sayer, called Miles' end." The ancient walls of Colchester do not appear to support many rare species. Wallflowers, of course, blossom in abundance as in the days of Gerarde and of Ray. Pellitory-of-the-wall, too, will be noticed in considerable plenty on the Castle keep, together with the beautiful ivy-leaved linaria, and a few plants of the viper's bugloss. Not far from the Castle will be found the stately remains of the once famous Priory of St. Botolph. Vast masses of ivy

cling about the splendid ruin; on the crumbling walls, as on the Castle keep, the wild wallflowers grow in lavish abundance; but in still greater profusion will be noticed the lesser calamint (*C. Nepeta*), conspicuous in autumn with its delicate lilac flowers; while nestling here and there among the fallen masonry a few plants of the rare soapwort will be seen.

THE ESSEX MARSHES

ALL along the low-lying coast of Essex, from the mouth of the Thames at Tilbury Fort to the towns of Harwich and Dovercourt, there stretch thousands of acres of salt-marshes, the haunt in former days of myriads of wild-fowl, and still of considerable interest to the naturalist. A glance at the ordnance map of the county will show the great extent of these "marshes" and "salterns," especially near the estuaries of the larger rivers, the Crouch, the Blackwater, and the Colne. A "marsh," it should be noted, differs from a "saltern," in being a tract of land reclaimed from the sea, and protected against the inroads of the tide by an artificial bank or sea-wall. These marshes, which make valuable grazing-land, are intersected by numerous dikes or ditches, known locally as "fleets," bordered in many places with dense jungles of reeds and rushes. "Saltings," on the other hand, are those stretches of marsh and mud land which have not been enclosed by a sea-wall, but are more or less flooded during the period of high tide.

To most persons this vast region of marsh-land would doubtless seem desolate enough, especially in the dreary days of winter when the wind is sighing among the reed-beds, and the peewit is uttering its mournful cry. But to the lover of nature these same marshes, in winter and summer alike, are of the deepest

interest and fascination. The tread of civilisation has hardly touched them, and as one wanders along the sea-banks, clothed with silver Artemisia and the wild spinach, it is easy to imagine the days when the early botanists went gathering "simples" along the Essex shore, when large colonies of black-headed gulls bred in the salt-marshes, when kites and buzzards soared overhead, and when the raven was a common bird. In former years immense numbers of wild-fowl were annually taken in the "decoys," of which there were many along the coast. During the winter of 1799 no less than ten thousand head of widgeon, teal, and wild-duck were captured in a single decoy at Tillingham. About the same time, at the famous Goldhanger decoy, "as many pochards were taken at one drop as filled a wagon, so as to require four stout horses to carry them away." Even now there are several decoys regularly worked in the Essex marshes, and a goodly number of birds are annually taken. Widgeon, teal, and wild-duck still abound along the coast in winter-time, and the rarer sorts of wild-fowl are not uncommon. The handsome pintail may occasionally be met with, and the pochard and the shoveller are far from rare. A few of the latter always remain to breed in the marshes, and the nest of the sheldrake may be found most seasons in the sand-hills near Dovercourt. Large numbers of coots still exist—in former years the gunners used to reckon them by the "acre"—and a custard made of coots' eggs has only recently ceased to be a regular dish at village festivals. A few small colonies of the black-headed gull, also known as the peewit gull and the cob, may be visited by those who know their haunts, but the eggs are no longer collected, nor the young birds fatted for the London market.

And if those vast stretches of lonely marsh-land, where the peregrine and the raven may still occasionally be seen, have a strong fascination for the ornithologist, they are no less dear to the botanist. The flora has but little changed since the days of the early herbalists, and most of the plants noticed by Gerarde and Merrett and John Ray and Adam Buddle may be found in their ancient habitats. Now, as then, the wild celery is plentiful in the marshes; the rarer form of sea-lavender continues to flourish at Walton, and the beautiful marsh-mallow, with its stem and leaves thickly clothed with starry down, puts forth its pale, rose-coloured flowers every autumn, as when in the sixteenth century old Gerarde found it "very abundantly" in the salterns "by Tilbury blockhouse." There is the same hoary growth of orache and wormwood, the wild beetroot grows as rankly as ever on the sea-banks, and the twin-spiked cord-grass (*Spartina stricta*) remains the characteristic plant of the muddy salterns as in the year 1667 when Merrett first recorded it as growing at "Crixey Ferry in Essex." A specimen of this plant, gathered "in August 1703 in the marshes about the river Wallfleet, near Fambridge Ferry in Dengey-hundred in Essex," may be seen in the Buddle herbarium, now preserved in the British Museum at South Kensington, which is one of the earliest collections of British plants in existence.

The stretch of country between the beautiful estuary of the Blackwater and the mouth of the river Colne is one of special interest to the naturalist. In this district at least fourteen decoys formerly existed, and one, occasionally used in hard winters, remains. In Ray's famous *Synopsis of British Plants* there are many references to these marshes, only some twelve miles

distant from his home at Notley, where the great naturalist found, among other notable plants, the broad-leaved pepperwort, the golden samphire, and the delicate sea-heath. In his day the sea scurvy-grass, "of great use in the curing of scurvy," grew so plentifully in the marshes about Maldon that the common people, he tells us, "gather it and send it about to the markets above ten miles distance, where it is sold by measure." But, strange to say, one scarce and striking plant, which to-day grows on the Essex shore, was overlooked both by Gerarde and Ray. This is the shrubby sea-blite, or *Suæda fruticosa*, which the writer has found in abundance at Maldon, St. Osyth, and in Mersea Isle. In the last locality the plants were as large as gorse-bushes, and could be seen for a considerable distance. Ray, indeed, mentions the plant as growing in the Isle of Portland, where it still flourishes on the pebble beach; but he is silent as to its existence in Essex. It was found, however, a few years after his death by his disciple, Samuel Dale; and it is interesting to know that a specimen gathered by him is preserved in the South Kensington Museum, and labelled in Dale's handwriting, "Western end of marsh bank, Harwich, plentifully."

The Isle of Mersea, situated at the junction of the Colne and the Blackwater, is still linked to the mainland by the old Roman causeway called the Strood, which crosses Pyefleet Creek, and is covered by the sea at high water. An additional interest is given to this locality as being the scene of Baring-Gould's powerful story *Mehalah*. Standing on the sea-bank over against Mersea "city," as a cluster of old wooden houses and an ancient inn are somewhat pretentiously called, one can see in the distance the cluster of thorn-

trees on the "Ray," which sheltered Glory's cottage, built of tarred wreckage timber and roofed with pantiles. Beyond the "fleet" stretch the salt-marshes of Salcot and Virley, where stood until recently the ruffian Rebow's lonely farmhouse, built in 1636, and known from its appearance as Red Hall. This district, in the early days of the last century, was a centre of the smuggling trade, and deeds of violence were far from rare. According to one story, a whole boat's crew were found on Sunken Island, off Mersea, with their throats cut, from whence they were transported to the churchyard and buried, and their boat turned keel upwards over them. It was difficult to realise such lawless deeds amid surroundings so calm and peaceful as presented themselves to the writer last September. Cattle and a few sheep were grazing in the "Ray" marshes, and a kestrel hawk was hovering over the thorn-trees. On the sea-bank the golden samphire was in flower, and hard by the rare dittander; a couple of wild-duck were lazily floating down the Rhyn; the rippling waters of the estuary were dotted here and there with the picturesque red sails of tiny fishing-craft; and no sound was to be heard save the rustling of the wind among the tall reeds and bulrushes that edged the "fleet," and the cry of the sea-birds as they settled on the mud-flats left bare by the receding tide. It was in Mersea Isle that many interesting plants were found by our early herbalists, and most of them still grow there. There are several specimens of the sea-wormwood, showing its various forms, now preserved in the British Museum, which were gathered by Samuel Dale in Mersea Isle two hundred years ago. Adam Buddle, vicar of North Fambridge, found the rare sea-trefoil in "the salt-marshes by the Strood." John Ray

noticed the glaucous form of the bulrush in the "sea-ditches at Mersea." Earlier still Gerarde gathered the beautiful sea-convolvulus, with its large, pale, rose-coloured flowers striped with red, on the sandy shore, and the very rare sea-cottonweed or *Diotis maritima*. This latter, he says, "groweth at a place called Merezey, six miles from Colchester, neere unto the sea-side." Unfortunately this exceedingly rare plant, which is thickly clothed with white cotton and bears small terminal heads of yellow flowers, is now lost on Mersea, and is no longer to be found in the county of Essex.

Another locality in the marshes intimately associated with the early history of the Essex flora is "Landermere Lading," at the head of Hamford Water. The spot, especially at high water, is a very picturesque one, with its ancient wharf and storehouses of black boarding roofed with deep-red tiles, and its group of fishermen's cottages, in one of which the famous physician Sir William Gull passed his early years. Even at low tide the vast stretch of mud-flats has a quiet beauty of its own, especially when the sea-lavender is in flower. On the sea-banks about Landermere a rare and striking plant, remarkable for its large umbels of yellow flowers, and found only in one or two localities in England, is still as plentiful as when Gerarde first discovered it in the sixteenth century. It is known as sulphurwort, the reason whereof is thus given by our famous herbalist: "I have digged up roots thereof," he says, "as big as a man's thigh, blacke without and white within, of a strong and grievous smell, and full of yellow sap or liquor, which quickly waxeth hard or dry, smelling not much unlike brimstone, called sulpher, which hath induced some to

call it sulphurwort." He found it "very plentifully on the south side of a wood, belonging to Walton, at the Naze in Essex, by the highway side." About a hundred years later Ray noticed it "in the salt ditches near Walton"; and there it flourishes to-day, the most distinguished plant of the Essex marshes. But sulphurwort was not the only plant that attracted the notice of John Gerarde at "Landamar Lading." In a meadow adjoining "a mill beyond a village called Thorp, at a place called Bandamar Lading"—evidently the same locality as the above—he found "in great plentie" the wild asparagus or sperage, corrupted in the language of the marshmen into "sparrow-grass." The writer searched in vain last autumn for this exceedingly rare plant in the vicinity of "Bandamar Lading"; but it is interesting to know that it still exists in the Essex marshes. Another handsome and important plant seen by the great herbalist at Landermere was the sea-holly or Eryngo. Ray thus refers to it in his list of rare Essex plants, published in 1695: "This being a plant common enough on sandy shores I should not have mentioned, but that Colchester is noted for the first inventing and practising the candying or conditing of its roots, the manner whereof may be seen in Gerarde's *Herbal*." The extract from Gerarde is too lengthy for quotation, but it is worthy of notice that a considerable trade in candied Eryngo-roots, as a remedy in pulmonary diseases, was at that time carried on at Colchester. The chamberlain's accounts for the borough in the early years of the seventeenth century contain frequent entries with regard to the payment for "Eryngoes," which seem to have been valued at about four shillings a pound. The trade was continued until comparatively recent years, when

it appears to have ceased in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient supply of roots.

In those days several native plants found in the salt-marshes were regularly gathered by the people and used as vegetables. In his scarce book on *The Antiquities of Harwich*, Samuel Dale tells us that the sea-beet or sea-spinach, so abundant along the coast, was commonly used "as a boiled sallet and in broths and soups." This good and sensible custom has not yet died out, and many a dish of wild spinach is gathered every spring in the salt-marshes along the coast. One of the commonest plants to be found on the mud of the salterns is Salicornia or glasswort, and this in the olden times was regularly gathered for purposes of pickling. It served as a substitute for the true samphire, which was not to be met with in the Essex marshes. But, strange to say, within the last few years a single patch of this species, *Crithmum maritimum*, a plant immortalised by Shakespeare, and still to be seen in luxuriant profusion in its historic locality on the chalk-cliffs of Dover, has been discovered in the salt-marshes not far from the Landermere Lading. Never before had the plant been recorded for the county, or, indeed, for the east coast of England. But there, on one solitary spot in the vast stretch of salterns, it was flourishing in lonely splendour. How it came there must be left to others to decide.

MARY RICH, COUNTESS OF WARWICK

SOME two or three miles from Felstead Church in the county of Essex, hidden away in a wooded hollow, and only to be approached by winding and narrow lanes, stands the still beautiful ruin of Leighs Priory. The magnificent gateway-tower of rich red brickwork, with noble Tudor windows and spiral chimneys of curious design, rises in lonely splendour from the ancient courtyard, now overgrown with grass and herbage. Other remains, dating back to the sixteenth century, and including the porter's lodge and a spacious hall, may still be seen, clothed with luxuriant ivy, in picturesque decay; but of the finer residential parts of the mansion not one stone is now left upon another.

It was here, in this quiet and sequestered spot, past which the tiny river Ter winds its way, that early in the thirteenth century a little community of Augustine canons settled themselves. Around the monastic buildings stretched a well-wooded park or forest in which the wild deer roamed. There was grand hunting, we are told, in the "Forest of Felstead" in those days. Down the valley, along the course of the little stream, the situation of the monastic fishponds may easily be traced, and one fine piece of water, the haunt of moorhens and other wild-fowl, still remains. For more than

three hundred years the good monks served God and man in peace, looking after their rich estate, meditating amid their beautiful surroundings, and succouring the sick and needy in the villages around. But at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries the priory shared the fate of similar establishments, and was granted by Henry VIII., together with one hundred other manors in the neighbourhood, to Robert Rich, at that time his Solicitor-General, and afterwards Lord Chancellor of England.

Of Lord Chancellor Rich, old Fuller quaintly says, "he was a lesser hammer under Cromwell to knock down abbeys; most of the grants of which going through his hands, no wonder if some stuck to his fingers." But whatever his character and career as a politician, he will be gratefully remembered in Essex as the founder of Felstead School and of the Rich almshouses; while the Tudor mansion which he built on the site of the Augustine priory must have been one of the most magnificent in the county. But a more interesting figure than that of the great Lord Chancellor, whose stately tomb in the south aisle of Felstead Church has been a familiar object to successive generations of Felstead boys, is associated with the picturesque ruin of the once splendid home. We refer to Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, wife of Charles Rich, fifth baron of that name.

The father of Mary Rich was the celebrated "gentleman adventurer," Richard Boyle, who made a huge fortune in Ireland, was created Earl of Cork by James I., and lived to see no fewer than four of his sons made peers. For Mary, "the great earl" designed, as for his other daughters, a brilliant match, but the Mr. Hamilton selected, only son of Lord

Clandeboye, found no favour in Mary's sight, and in spite of her father's displeasure she refused to marry him. Her heart, it appears, was set on Charles Rich, a younger son of the Earl of Warwick and Baron of Leeze (as the name was spelt in those days), and with small prospect of succeeding to the title. Her father's opposition to the match was at length "by my Lord Warwick's and my Lord Goreing's intercession" overcome, and he told me, writes Mary, "that I should be suddenly married." A splendid ceremony in London was desired by the great Earl for his loving, if wayward, daughter, but this again was sorely against Mary's inclinations. She could "not endure to be Mrs. Bride in a public wedding." And so, she goes on to say, "I was, by that fear and Mr. Rich's earnest solicitation, prevailed with, without my father's knowledge, to be privately married at a little village near Hampton Court on July 21, 1641, called Shepertone; which, when my father knew he was again something displeased at me for it, but after I had begged his pardon, and assured him I did it only to avoid a public wedding, which he knew I had always declared against, his great indulgence to me made him forgive me that fault also; and within a few days after I was carried down to Lees, my Lord of Warwick's house in the country, where I received as kind a welcome as was possible from that family, and particularly from my good father-in-law."

And so the youthful bride, "being but fifteen years old, and as much as between the 8th of November and 21st July," settled down at Leighs Priory, which, with the exception of one brief interval, and of occasional visits to London, was to be her home for seven-

and-thirty years. Little did she then dream of what the vicissitudes of fortune had in store for her. The wife of a younger son, and with only the most distant prospect of succeeding to the title, it so came about, in those days of premature death, that eighteen years later, at the age of thirty-three, she found herself Countess of Warwick, and mistress of the Tudor mansion and vast estates of Leighs Priory. Though married to the man of her choice, her domestic life was for many years one of patient endurance, sometimes of bitter sorrow. For twenty years before his death her husband was grievously afflicted with the gout, which rendered more ungovernable his passionate temper. Her "dear and only" son died of the small-pox within a few months of his coming of age; and when fourteen years later the Countess herself followed him to the tomb in Felstead Chapel, the beautiful priory passed to owners of another name.

When Mary Rich was about twenty-one that change occurred which she was wont to regard as her conversion, or awakening to spiritual life. Her diary indicates very clearly the conflict through which she was passing. She is constantly reproaching herself for her former love of "curious dressing and fine and rich clothes, and spending her precious time in nothing else but reading romances, and seeing plays, and in going to court and Hyde Parke and Spring Garden." She makes promises to God of a new life, but her good resolutions are often broken. She fears that God will, some way or other, punish her. "At last," she says, "it pleased God to send a sudden sickness upon my only son, who I then doated on with great fondness. My conscience told me it was for my backsliding. Upon this conviction I presently retired to

MARY RICH, COUNTESS OF WARWICK

From a print in the possession of Sir Charles Stuart Rich, Bart.

God, and by earnest prayer begged of Him to restore my child, and did then solemnly promise to God, if He would hear my prayer, I would become a new creature. This prayer of mine God was so gracious as to grant; and of a sudden began to restore my child, which made the doctor himself wonder at the sudden amendment he saw in him, and filled me then with grateful thoughts. After my child's recovery I began to find in myself a great desire to go into the country, which I never remember before to have had, thinking it always the saddest thing that could be when we were to remove." When Mary was again at Leighs she found great consolation in conversing with the household chaplain, Dr. Walker; and it pleased God, she tells us, "by his ministry to work exceedingly upon me, he preaching very awakingly and warmly the two texts which were, by God's mercy, set home to me, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God'; and the other was, 'Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace.' By the first," she adds, "I was much terrified, but by the last I was much allured to come unto God, and to taste of the sweetness of religion, which he told me was very sweet, and which I afterwards experienced to be true." Henceforth a life of gaiety and social excitement had lost its attraction for Mary Rich, and though she still moved in the world of rank and fashion, and after the Restoration was not infrequently at Court, she yet found her chief stay and happiness in religious exercises and in quiet meditation in her beloved "wilderness" at Leighs.

The "wilderness," or wild garden, the most sacred spot in connection with the life of Mary Rich, may

still be traced on the farther side of the little stream which runs past the priory ruins. Here she was accustomed, summer and winter alike, to spend two hours every morning, as soon as she was up, in prayer and meditation. Many are the references in her diary to this pious habit, which invests with a deep interest the few ancient thorn bushes which remain, and the dark clumps of *Iris fœtidissima* which mark the site of the monastic garden. The "wilderness" was to this Puritan saint as an oratory, where she gained strength and consolation in the trials and difficulties of life. "If," says Dr. Walker, her "soul father," "she exceeded herself in anything as much as she excelled others in most things, it was in meditation. This was her masterpiece." To be alone with God, and alone with God in the "wilderness," this was the desire and the secret of her life. "The way not to be alone," she wrote to a friend, "is to be alone, and you will find yourself never less alone than when you are so. For certainly the God that makes all others good company must needs be best Himself." And so, morning by morning, she retired alone into the "wilderness" to meditate. Sometimes she is "weary and distracted," and grieves over her "amazing dulness and wandering thoughts." "My mind," she writes, "was discomposed, and I had upon me a great lightness and vanity of spirit, and could not for a long time bring my mind into any serious frame." At other times she rejoices in the Lord, and her mind is radiant with "white celestial thoughts." "My meditation of God was sweet," she enters in her diary; "I had large meditations of the great mercy of God in sending the Holy Ghost, and found my heart much affected with it." After the

manner of Puritan theology, her mind is much occupied with thoughts of death and eternity. "I was much comforted," she says, "with thoughts of my eternal rest;" or "God was pleased to awaken my heart with the serious thoughts of death and of eternity and of the day of judgment."

Among the volumes of Lady Warwick's manuscripts in the British Museum are no less than twelve little books of what she calls *Occasional Meditations*. The titles or themes of these compositions, of which nearly two hundred remain, reveal in a striking manner her appreciation of nature. The sights and sounds of country life are to her allegories of things unseen and eternal. They furnish her with subjects from which she draws the most telling spiritual analogies. A "sudden surprising storm," a lark singing, a snail on the garden path, a bank of anemones, a hen flying undauntedly at a kite, then common in Essex, "that came to get the chickens from her"; the decoy pond in the Park, still remaining; her "little bitch" after a rabbit, her pet linnets, a dead fish floating down the stream, "My Lady Essex Rich's pet hen,"—these and similar subjects form the texts of her meditations. The most pathetic of these compositions, suggested by the cutting down of her beloved "wilderness," deserves to be quoted, revealing as it does the great sorrow of her life: "This sweet place that I have seen ye first sprouting, growth, and flourishing of for above twenty years together, and almost daily taken delight in, I have also now to my trouble seen by my Lord's command ye cutting down of, in order to its after growing again thicker and better, tho' I have often interceded with him to have it spared longer. This brought to my remembrance afresh ye death of

my only son, whom I had also seen ye first growth of in his childhood and ye flourishing of to my unspeakable satisfaction for almost twenty-one years; and in a short space of time, to my unspeakable grief, by my great Lord's command cut down by death that he might rise again in a better and more flourishing condition; though I often implored, if it were agreeable to the Divine will, he might be longer continued to me."

When Mary Rich had so unexpectedly become Countess of Warwick she came to Lees, she tells us, with "a design to glorify God what I could, and to do what good I could to all my neighbours." This noble determination, so faithfully fulfilled, gives the keynote of her life. In addition to her morning's meditation, it was her constant habit to read several times a day in some pious book, of which St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Baxter's *Saint's Rest*, and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* were among the favourites. She would also, her chaplain tells us, scatter good books in all the common rooms and places of waiting, that those who waited might not lose their time, but have a bait laid to catch them. Household affairs occupied a large share of her attention. Many are the entries in her diary, which show how faithfully those duties were performed. One or two may be quoted: "Having this morning heard of some disorders that were in my house, I set myself to reprove for them, after I had first prayed to God to let me rebuke without passion, and by God's blessing I was enabled to do my duty without any transporting passion." "Spent some time with my servant, Harry Smith, who was ill." A few days after he dies, and the Countess goes to see his widow. Or Joyce Ceeley,

the still-house woman, is sick, and requires attention. Then "one of the men-cookes" has fits, and though it is "a ghastly mortifying sight," the mistress goes herself to see what can be done for him. When Lawrence the footman is to receive the Sacrament, a long time is spent in preparing him. Later on is the entry: "Gave counsel to Leonard the coachman;" and again: "Spent a deal of time giving good counsel to Boeke, who is going from my Lord's service." Nor are the poor women who worked in the garden forgotten: "I spent some time of this morning in catechising some of the poor weeding-women, and in stirring them up to look after their souls." Neither are the cottagers neglected. The sick and suffering are carefully provided for; old Betty Knightbridge and Goody Crow, and other feeble folk, are visited in their humble homes; and a dame's school is established in the village. Moreover, the affairs of the ejected ministers receive her careful attention. After the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662, a member of Puritan ministers found a true friend and protector in Lady Warwick. We find them constantly staying at Leighs Priory, and supported to a large extent by her bounty. The diary has many allusions to the deep and edifying discourses of these good ministers delivered in the private chapel of Leighs. Of sermons our devout Countess seems never to weary; and not satisfied with the ministrations of her own chaplains, she was wont to attend the services in many of the village churches around.

But engaged as she frequently was in religious exercises and in deeds of charity, the Countess was no recluse, and seems never to have shunned the

duties of society. Indeed, she appears rather to have been famed for hospitality, and for "noble and splendid way of living." Her funeral sermon, in the high-flown language of the day, tells us that "as a neighbour she was so kind and courteous it advanced the rent of the adjacent houses to be situated near her"; "and not only her house and table, but her countenance and very heart was open to all persons of quality in a considerable circuit." When at Warwick House in London she mixed constantly in the highest society, and was in familiar intercourse with the most distinguished persons in the political and the scientific world. At Leighs she moved freely among her Essex neighbours, and appears to have devoted nearly every afternoon to receiving or paying visits. Within a radius of ten or twelve miles of Leighs Priory a large number of stately houses were to be seen, and the Warwick coach seems to have been for ever on the roads. There was "my Lady Everard" of Langleys, and old Lady Vere of Kirby Hall. At Little Easton Lodge, of which parish the saintly Ken was minister, lived my Lord and Lady Maynard, the best beloved of Mary's friends. Once, on her way thither, an accident befell her, which may be told in her own language: "1661, July the 23rd. I was going from Lees to Easton to visit my Lady Maynard, and had in my coach with me my Lady Anne and my Lady Essex Rich; and when I was just out of Dunmow town the horses ran with us, and flung out the coachman and overthrew us in the coach, in which fall the Lady Essex escaped being hurt; but I was much so, having a great blow on my head, and a great and dangerous cut in one of my knees. I was, by the great blow in my head, so disordered, that for a long time I knew

not anything; and by the great cut I had in my knee I was a long time so very lame that I could not go out at all, and had like to have been always so if God had not mercifully, by His blessing on the use of means, restored me to my legs again." Then at Mark's Hall lived "my Lady Honeywood," and Sir John Dawes at Bocking. Some twelve miles away, in the parish of Finchingfield, stood the Tudor mansion of Spains Hall, and thither the Countess would sometimes travel to pay her compliments to Mistress Kempe. She would see the seven fishponds in the well-wooded park which commemorated the strange vow of silence which only fifty years before "Mr. William Kempe Esqre" had imposed upon himself, and she would doubtless visit his tomb in the chapel of the grand old Norman church, and read with wonder the unique epitaph which tells us he was "Pious, just, hospitable, master of himself so much that what others scarce doe by force and penalties, He did by a voluntary constancy, Hold his peace for seven years." And so, troubled and perplexed, she would turn home again to her beloved Leeze.

For some years after her husband's death the widowed Countess remained mistress of the beautiful priory. She had often prayed, "Grant that in the evening of life I may have the most serene and quiet times, that so I may undisturbedly prepare for my change." And after the settlement of her lord's affairs, which for a time took her constantly up to London, she settled down to the quiet seclusion of her Essex home. The old life of peaceful meditation in her much-loved "wilderness" went on, together with her acts of charity to the poor around. She had often expressed the wish "to die praying," and so suddenly

and unexpectedly it came about. For some days she had been suffering from an "aguish distemper," a complaint not uncommon in the damp neighbourhood of the priory fishponds, but her condition excited no alarm, and she was able to sit up and to discourse cheerfully and piously with those around her. "Well, ladies," she said, "if I were one hour in heaven, I would not be again with you, as well as I love you." Then, in the narrative of Dr. Walker, the aged minister who three-and-thirty years before had guided her feet into the way of peace, and who was with her at the end, "having received a kind visit from a neighbouring lady, she said she would go into her bed, but first would desire one of the ministers then in the house to go to prayer with her; and asking the company which they would have, presently resolved herself to have him who was going away, because the other would stay and pray with her daily; and immediately he (Dr. Walker) being called, and come, her ladyship, sitting in her chair, by reason of her weakness—for otherwise she always kneeled—holding an orange in her hand, to which she smelt, almost at the beginning of her prayer she was heard to fetch a sigh or groan, which was esteemed devotional, as she used to do at other times. But a lady looking up, who kneeled by her, saw her look pale, and her hand hang down, at which she started up affrighted, and all applied themselves to help; and the most afflictively distressed of them all, if I may so speak, when all our sorrows were superlative, catched her right hand, which then had lost its pulse and never recovered it again." It was on Friday, April 12, 1678, at the comparatively early age of fifty-two, that Mary Rich died. A few days later the mournful but magnificent

funeral procession passed beneath the Tudor tower, to which the swallows were just returning, and over the red-brick bridge which spanned the tiny stream, and winding its way past the "wilderness," then starred with primroses and anemones, and beside the old monastic ponds, it followed the grassy lanes to Felstead Church, where, amid the genuine sorrow of the simple villagers, the coffin of their good benefactress was lowered into the family vault beneath the imposing effigy of Lord Chancellor Rich.

No monument to her memory is to be found in Felstead Church, and only a few dim and uncertain traditions linger in the neighbourhood of the ruined priory. A large room in the solitary gateway tower, lighted at either end with a noble Tudor window, and reached by a winding staircase in the south-east turret, is believed to be the one in which the Countess interviewed her tenants and transacted the business of her estate; and "a little white flower" that grows by the river is said to be known among the cottage folk as "Lady Rich's flower." But the wooded dell beyond the stream, with its gnarled and stunted thorns, its shining clumps of Iris and Alexander, and its sweet forget-me-nots—the site of the beloved "wilderness"—is hallowed ground, the most sacred spot in connection with the memory of the pious Puritan lady, whose one aim and object in life was to "glorify God" and to do what good she could to her neighbours in the parishes around.

IZAAK WALTON AT DROXFORD

THE interest in Izaak Walton continues among cultured people; indeed, of late years it seems to have increased rather than diminished. Books dealing with his life are still published, and new editions of *The Compleat Angler* are issued from the Press. Among other evidences that "meek Walton's heavenly memory" is still cherished may be mentioned the proposal to fill with stained glass the window in Prior Silkstede's chapel above his grave in Winchester Cathedral. Recently, too, a volume entitled *Izaak Walton and his Friends* has been published, in which the writer, Mr. Stapleton Martin, endeavours to bring out the spiritual side of Walton's character.

And this interest in "the best of fishermen and men" is not to be wondered at. In days of hurry and excitement, when "the world is too much with us," it is refreshing to turn to the pages of *The Compleat Angler*, which breathes in every line the spirit of contentment and peace. It is not that the book is of any special value as a treatise on fishing or natural history, for it is full of the quaintest and most antiquated conceits; rather it is the repose and tranquillity displayed throughout it that renders the little volume of such enduring value to so many readers. "Among all your readings," wrote Charles Lamb to Coleridge, "did you ever light upon *Walton's Compleat Angler?*

It breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart. There are many choice old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every discordant, angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it." And this quality of serenity is the more remarkable when we remember the turbulent age in which it appeared. The King and the Archbishop had perished on the scaffold only a few years before; the Long Parliament had just been dissolved by Cromwell with the significant words, "The Lord has done with you;" many of the most devoted of the clergy had recently been turned out of their livings; episcopacy was abolished; and a Royalist, such as Walton was, must have felt that his lot had indeed fallen on evil days. And yet his writings betray no resentment; not a harsh word, not an uncharitable judgment is met with; only gladness and purity and singleness of heart. It is to this aspect of his work that Keble refers when, in a well-known stanza of *The Christian Year*, he exclaims:

> "O who can tell how calm and sweet,
> Meek Walton! shews thy green retreat,
> When, wearied with the tale thy times disclose,
> The eye first finds thee out in thy secure repose?"

The good man, as Wordsworth wrote of him upon a blank leaf in *The Compleat Angler*, was "nobly versed in simple discipline," and he could thank God for the smell of lavender, and the songs of birds, and a "good day's fishing"; for "health and a competence and a quiet conscience." "Every misery that I miss is a new mercy," he says to his honest scholar, as they walk towards Tottenham High Cross, "and therefore

let us be thankful. What would a blind man give to see the pleasant rivers and meadows and flowers that we have met with since we met together; and this, and many other like blessings we enjoy daily."

And *The Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation* is a mirror of Izaak Walton's life. "It is a picture," as he says to the reader, "of my own disposition." And it was doubtless this spirit of "gladsome piety," this love of "innocent, harmless mirth," coupled with a deep vein of "seriousness at seasonable times," this power of detachment from the noisy movements of the world, this delight in the beauties of nature, this quality of "meekness," that enabled him to "possess the earth," which endeared the "honest fisherman" to the hearts of so many distinguished men. Walton, it has been well said, had a genius for friendship. Although of comparatively humble birth and occupation, he was on terms of the closest intimacy with many of the most learned men of his day. His circle of friends included such men as Archbishops Ussher and Sheldon, as Bishops Morley of Winchester, Ward of Sarum, King of Chichester, and Sanderson of Lincoln; as Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton, Dr. Donne, the famous Dean of St. Paul's, Fuller the historian, the "ever memorable" Hales, Dr. Hammond, and William Chillingworth.

It is therefore all the more disappointing that a man of so many and distinguished friendships, who himself recorded with considerable detail the lives of no fewer than five of his contemporaries, should have left so little record of his own career. The details of Walton's life, especially of certain periods of it, are exceedingly meagre. Though he lived "full ninety years and past," the story of the greater portion of his life is an almost

total blank. For purposes of convenience we may be allowed to divide his long life into four periods—his early life up to the time of his residence in London; the business period of twenty years, during which he lived in Fleet Street, at the corner of Chancery Lane; the period of his second marriage, marked by the publication of *The Compleat Angler;* and the period of his old age, from the death of his second wife in 1662, when Walton was seventy, to his own death twenty years later. We may briefly glance, by way of leading up to the special purpose of this paper, at these successive periods of his life.

He was born at Stafford on August 9, 1593, and baptized in St. Mary's Church on the 21st of the following month, when he received the name of "Izaak," perhaps, as Dean Stanley suggested, after the learned Isaac Casaubon, who appears to have been a friend of the family. Of his childhood and youth nothing whatever is known. In 1613, when he was twenty years of age, there appeared a poem, "The Love of Amos and Laura," which is dedicated by the writer, "To my approved and much respected friend, Iz. Wa.," which seems to indicate that his mind was already drawn towards literature. From 1624 to 1644 he resided in Fleet Street, where he appears to have carried on business as a "sempster" or linen-draper. Here he became intimate with Dr. Donne, who was rector of the parish and who introduced Walton to many distinguished men. His twenty years' residence at St. Dunstan's was marked by many a sorrow, including the death of his first wife, who was a descendant of Archbishop Cranmer's, of both his children, and of his intimate friends Wotton and Donne. To this period belongs the publication of his

first work, of which Hales of Eton is reported to have said that "he had not seen a Life written with more advantage to the subject, or more reputation to the writer, than that of Dr. Donne."

In 1644, at the age of fifty, Walton retired from business, and deeming London "a dangerous place for honest men to live in," returned, it seems, at any rate for a time, to his native town of Stafford. It is difficult, however, to trace with any certainty his movements during this the third period of his life. In 1646 he married his second wife, Anne Ken, half-sister to Thomas Ken, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells, and this happy union doubtless brought him into still closer connection with the ecclesiastical world. A few years later appeared his *Life of Sir Henry Wotton*, followed in 1653 by *The Compleat Angler*, the work by which he is now most generally known. During this period we may think of him as residing for a time at Stafford, and afterwards, it appears, at Clerkenwell; as spending his time partly in literary work and partly in fishing, sometimes with his friend, Charles Cotton, in Dovedale; and as visiting his numerous friends in various parts of the country. In 1662, probably when on a visit to Bishop Morley, who had recently been appointed to Worcester, the great calamity of Walton's life occurred. His second wife died, leaving him a widower at the age of seventy, with two children—Anne, aged fifteen, who was to be the stay and comfort of his old age, and Izaak, aged eleven, afterwards Rector of Poulshot, in Wiltshire, and Canon of Salisbury Cathedral. She was buried in the Lady Chapel of Worcester Cathedral, and her epitaph, written by Walton, speaks of her as being "A woman of remarkable prudence and

primitive piety, her great and general knowledge being adorned with such true humility, and blest with so much Christian meekness, as made her worthy of a more memorable monument."

We now come to what we have ventured to call the fourth or last period of Walton's life, and of this period, especially of the last seven years of it, little beyond conjecture, more or less probable, is to be found in his biographies; and even Mr. Stapleton Martin, the latest of his eulogists, has no fresh light whatever to throw upon it. It is usually supposed that the old man spent most of his time with Bishop Morley at Farnham or Winchester, and the belief seems to be based on a statement by Dr. Zouch that "Walton and his daughter had apartments constantly reserved for them in the houses of Dr. Morley, the Bishop of Winchester, and of Dr. Ward, Bishop of Salisbury." This assertion need not be disputed; there can be little doubt that after the death of his wife in 1662 the aged fisherman and his youthful daughter frequently visited their friends, especially Bishop Morley at Farnham Castle, where he wrote his *Lives* of "Mr. Richard Hooker" and of "Mr. George Herbert," and Bishop Ward at Sarum, and doubtless Charles Cotton, on the banks of the Dove. But in the year 1676, when Izaak Walton had attained the great age of eighty-three, his daughter Anne, the inseparable companion and comfort of his old age, was married to Dr. William Hawkins, usually described as a Prebendary of Winchester Cathedral. Now this event cannot but have greatly influenced the conditions and surroundings of the old man's life, which had still some seven years to run. But of these seven years his biographers have nothing to tell us. His last visit

to Charles Cotton seems to have taken place in the year of his daughter's marriage, probably in her company, shortly before the ceremony took place. He was now becoming too old for his beloved occupation of fishing, except in fine weather; and the fatigues of travelling were great in those days. The only event of any importance which breaks the silence of those seven years was the publication of his *Life of Dr. Robert Sanderson*, which appeared in 1678, and was dedicated to his old friend Bishop Morley of Winchester; but there is nothing to show where the book was written. In the concluding paragraph of the *Life* the aged author says: "'Tis now too late to wish that my life may be like his, for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age: but I humbly beseech Almighty God that my death may; and do as earnestly beg of every Reader to say, 'Amen.'" Even of his death no particulars remain. We only know that he passed away on December 15, 1683, during the great frost of that year, at the house of his son-in-law, Dr. Hawkins, in the Close at Winchester.

But it has long seemed to the writer that with regard to these closing years of Walton's life sufficient use has not been made by his biographers of the details contained in his will. This most interesting document, well known to all his admirers, was begun by the old man on his birthday, a few months before his death, "being," he says, "in the ninetyeth year of my age, and in perfect memory, for which praised be God." Now the respect and affection with which, in his will, Walton speaks of Dr. Hawkins, "whom," he says, "I love as my own son," is most noticeable, and lends some support to the contention of the writer that these last years were spent, not, as is usually

supposed, in the houses of various friends, but under the loving care of his daughter and son-in-law, in whose house at Winchester, as we have seen, he eventually died. And this surmise, which is obviously the natural one, is not without confirmation in other directions. The passage in his will will be remembered—"I also give unto my daughter all my books at Winchester and Droxford, and whatever in those two places are or I can call mine. To my son Isaak I give all my books at Farnham Castell, and a deske of prints and pictures, also a cabinett near my bed's head, in which are some little things that he will value, though of no great worth." It is evident from this passage that Izaak Walton in his last years had some close connection, not only with Farnham and Winchester, but also with Droxford, a village in the Meon Valley some fourteen miles from the Cathedral city. At Farnham, it is clear, he still had his own chamber at the "Castell," where he had written the *Lives* of Hooker and of Herbert, and where he was always sure of a warm welcome from his old friend of forty years' standing. At Winchester there was the Canon's house in the venerable Close, near to the one occupied by Dr. Ken, at that time a Prebendary of the cathedral, where he lived peacefully with his daughter and Dr. Hawkins, and not, as his biographers have imagined, with Bishop Morley, for Wolvesey Palace, on the building of which the good bishop was engaged, was not finished at the time of Walton's death. But what was his connection with Droxford? To discover this connection at once became the object of the writer when he was appointed Rector of Droxford a few years ago. From the ordinary sources of in-

formation he could learn nothing. The biographers of Izaak Walton, so far as he is aware, pass over this mention of Droxford in almost total silence. Even Mr. Stapleton Martin makes no reference to it. The word "Droxford" does not so much as occur in his index. Sir Harris Nicolas does indeed suggest that perhaps Walton had a house or apartments in the village, which from the passage already quoted in the will is abundantly evident. Mr. Dewar, in his Winchester edition of *The Compleat Angler*, is the first to hint at the true solution, although he admits that he had "not succeeded in finding out anything about Walton at Droxford." He states, however, that Dr. Hawkins, besides being Prebendary of Winchester, was also Rector of Droxford. The writer had already met with this bare statement in Bowles's *Life of Bishop Ken*, published about the year 1830, but had entirely failed to substantiate it. Repeated searches in the episcopal register, alike at Winchester and at the Record Office, produced no evidence that William Hawkins was ever Rector of Droxford. The matter, however, was happily set at rest by the writer's discovery in one of the Composition Books at the Record Office of the entry of the payments made by "William Hawkins, S.T.P., in November 1664," on his institution to the living. He followed, it appears, one Dr. Nicholas Preston, who had been deprived during the time of the Commonwealth, but had been restored to his rights on the accession of Charles II., and died in September 1664. The living of Droxford Dr. Hawkins continued to hold, in conjunction with his canonry, to which he had been appointed two years previously, until the time of his death, which occurred in 1691.

The fact, then, now fully established, of his son-in-law holding preferment at Droxford as well as at Winchester may be taken as the undoubted explanation of the connection of these two places in the will of Izaak Walton. With the exception of an occasional visit to Farnham, he passed his closing years—

> "serene and bright,
> And calm as is a Lapland night,"

in the loving care of his daughter and her husband, sometimes in the Close at Winchester, and sometimes in the rambling old rectory on the banks of the Meon stream.

And that these visits to Droxford were of more than a mere passing nature may be inferred, not only from the way in which he speaks of his library and belongings, but also from the fact, lately discovered by the writer, that he had more than one intimate friend among the residents there. His books, as already has been noticed, Walton divided between his son and daughter, mentioning, however, one or two volumes for which evidently he had a personal affection. Thus to Dr. Hawkins he gives *Dr. Donne's Sermons*, which, he adds, "I have heard preacht and read with much content." To his son Izaak he gives "Dr. Sibbs his *Soul's Conflict*," and to his daughter *The Bruised Reed*, "desiring them to read them so as to be well acquainted with them." One other individual shares with his children this special mark of Walton's esteem. "I give," we read, "to Mr. John Darbyshire the *Sermons* of Mr. Anthony Farringdon or of Dr. Sanderson, which my executor thinks fit." Moreover, among the friends mentioned

DROXFORD CHURCH

in his will, to whom Walton bequeaths a ring, with the motto "A friend's farewell. I. W., obiit," we also find the name of "Mr. John Darbyshire." The identity, therefore, of this individual, for whom Walton evidently had a great regard, becomes a question of distinct interest as throwing light on the friendships of his last years. The feeling, therefore, of satisfaction which the writer experienced when he discovered that "Mr. John Darbyshire" was Dr. Hawkins's curate at Droxford will easily be imagined. He was evidently a person of some position, for though at Droxford he was only curate, yet after the manner of the age he held preferment elsewhere. From a mural tablet in the north chapel of the church, to the memory of his first wife, who died the year before his aged friend, we learn that "Mr. John Darbyshire was Rector of Portland and Curate of Droxford." At Droxford, as seems to be clear from the registers, he resided, and the chief events in his family history were connected with the place. Walton, we may be sure, regularly attended his ministrations in the parish church, and took a deep interest in his personal affairs, which had been darkened, as the burial register reveals, by much sorrow. It must therefore have been with feelings of pleasure that, a few weeks before his death, the aged fisherman heard of his friend's second marriage in Droxford church to "Mrs. Frances Uvedale," youngest daughter of Sir Richard Uvedale, Kt., whose family, from the time of William of Wykeham, had exercised a wide influence in the Meon Valley.

Among the other friends mentioned in his will to whom Walton leaves a ring as "a friend's farewell" will also be noticed the name of "Mr. Francis Morley."

He too, the writer has discovered, was a resident of Droxford, and lies buried in a vault in the north-west corner of Droxford church, beneath the floor of the baptistery. The Jacobean manor-house in which he lived, with its quaint gables and legends of secret passages, is still standing over against the rectory, and the gateway in the massive red-brick garden wall still opens into the orchard, through which "old Izaak" and his comparatively youthful friend must have often passed together. Francis Morley, as we learn from his marble tablet in the church, was a nephew of the Bishop of Winchester, and this fact doubtless deepened the intimacy between the two men. He was also a warm friend of Thomas Ken, and when, two years after Walton's death, Ken was made Bishop of Bath and Wells, Francis Morley supplied him with the necessary cash in hand to meet the expenses of his consecration. A most interesting relic of this Droxford friend of our "honest fisherman" is still preserved in the rectory garden. In the middle of the undulating lawn, near the lofty tulip-tree, at the moment of writing covered with thousands of exquisite blossoms, there stands a stone pedestal, which supports a sundial, of stately proportions and design on which is carved two heraldic devices. The one coat-of-arms represents the armorial bearings of the Morley family impaled with those of the Tancreds; and the other the Morley arms impaled with those of the Herberts. The stone pedestal, then, it is clear, commemorates the marriages of father and son—of Walton's friend, Francis Morley, with Jane Tancred, which took place in the year 1652; and of Francis Morley's eldest son, Charles, who married Magdalene, daughter of Sir Henry Herbert and niece

of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. The exact date of this latter marriage the writer has been unable to discover; but inasmuch as Charles Morley died in 1697 at the age of forty-five, and Magdalene in 1737 at the age of eighty-two—they are both buried in Droxford church—they would have been respectively thirty-one and twenty-eight at the time of Walton's death. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that they were married before that event took place; and if so, it is permissible to believe that the family sundial was erected in the lifetime, perhaps at the instigation, of the old fisherman.

The old rectory is still standing, although somewhat enlarged since the days of Izaak Walton. Part of it, however, remains in exactly the same condition as in the closing years of the seventeenth century. The floors are still boarded with wide planks of oak, and the leaden lattice casements remain. One or two rooms facing south, for the old man was nearing ninety and doubtless felt the cold mists arising from the river, may not unnaturally be associated with our friend. On the walls would hang one or two "prints and pictures," which recalled happy memories of bygone days. There he would keep his books, at any rate some of his favourites, such as *Dr. Donne's Sermons*, or *The Returning Backslider*, by Dr. Sibbs (now in the Cathedral Library at Salisbury), or the works of "holy Mr. Herbert" or of Dr. Sanderson. A copy of *The Compleat Angler*, doubtless of the first edition, was, we may be sure, upon the shelves, and a collected edition of *The Lives*. Perhaps in a corner of the room stood his fishing-rod and tackle, for though age prevented him from visiting his friend Cotton in Dovedale, yet in fine weather he would stroll

down the glebe meadows where the bee-orchis grows and try his hand at "catching trouts" in "the swift, shallow, clear, pleasant brook" of the Meon. Sometimes in cold weather, when the elements kept the old man indoors, Mr. John Darbyshire or Squire Morley would come over to the rectory for a chat by the fireside. Walton would relate to his friends many anecdotes of the great Churchmen he had known in former years, of Sir Henry Wotton, and Hales, and Chillingworth. He would tell, in tones of awe, of "the dreadful vision" which once appeared to Dr. Donne; or he would show the gold signet ring his friend had left him, and with which he afterwards signed his will, in which was set a bloodstone with the figure of the Crucified, not on the cross, but on an anchor, as the emblem of hope; or, in a lighter vein, he would tell of the pleasant days long gone by when he "had laid aside business, and gone a-fishing with honest Nat and R. Roe"; or perhaps he would play a "game at shovel-board" with his friends. Mr. John Darbyshire, on his part, would have much to tell of the way in which, a few years before he came, the quiet village of Droxford was affected by the great rebellion. He would repeat the story learnt from the parishioners, how "the learned Dr. Preston," "for his eminent loyalty," had been shamefully entreated, and how grievously the Church had suffered from the iconoclasm of the age. He would not forget to speak of the stately altar tomb which for four centuries had stood in the south chapel to the memory of the mother of John de Drokenford, the famous Bishop of Bath and Wells and Chancellor of England in the troubled days of Edward II., and which had been utterly destroyed, and her monumental effigy of Purbeck marble thrust out of the church, and buried somewhere in the meadows

below. Then he would tell of the return of "the beloved minister," and how he set himself to repair the mischief which had been wrought, panelling the sanctuary with oak, and fencing it off with stately altar rails. These Jacobean altar rails have lately been restored to the church, and it is pleasant to think that the aged author of *The Compleat Angler* must have often leaned against them when he received the Holy Communion from the hands of Dr. Hawkins or of Mr. John Darbyshire.

Thus the days of the old man at Droxford would pass quietly and uneventfully by. In the month of May he would listen to the "sweet loud music" of the nightingale, which returns every year to the rectory garden. Or he would take "a gentle walk to the river," perhaps in company with his little granddaughter Anne, and point out to her "the lilies and lady-smocks" in the glebe meadows. Beneath "the cool shade of the honeysuckle hedge" he would rest awhile, and watch the moorhens in "the gliding stream," or listen to the notes of the sedge-warbler. The old mill is still standing, on the bridge of which the aged angler must have often lingered as he watched the rush of water making pleasant music beneath his feet. Indeed, the village is but little changed since the days, now over two hundred years ago, when Dr. Hawkins was rector and Mr. John Darbyshire looked after the spiritual welfare of the people, and Squire Morley presided at the parish meetings. The even tenour of life went quietly on, broken only now and again by some domestic affliction, or some family rejoicing as when, it may be, in the presence of the rector and Mr. John Darbyshire, and of the revered and venerable fisherman, the Morley sundial was placed in position on the lawn.

AN "ANCIENT MARKET-TOWNE"

TITCHFIELD

SOME two miles from the mouth of the river Meon in Hampshire, a low bridge of ancient workmanship spans the narrow stream. It is a stone structure, dating back to the fourteenth century, and with nothing particular to distinguish it save its curious triangular "quartering-place," which affords safe shelter to the traveller from the wheels of passing vehicles. A few plants of the interesting little fern, the Ruta-muraria or wall-rue spleenwort, are growing between the interstices of the stones, which are coloured here and there with the stains of centuries. Sitting on the low parapet of the bridge, in the shelter of the ancient "quartering-place," one views the picturesque remains of what in 1540 Leland described as "Mr. Wriothesley's righte statelie house embatayled, and having a goodlie gate, and a conducte castelid in the middle of the court of yt, in the very place where the late monastery of the Premostratenses stood, called Tichefelde."

The "righte statelie house" is now in ruins, tenanted only by owls and jackdaws, and covered by dense masses of ivy in picturesque confusion. The lofty grey turrets of the gatehouse still rise from among the surrounding trees, together with one or two columnar chimneys of red brick, and around these

the swifts are sailing and shrieking, as they sailed and shrieked of old when the house stood in all its ancient glory. For the Mr. Wriothesley who built this stately house was the famous Lord Chancellor of England in the reign of Henry VIII., best known perhaps to the majority of English readers as the Lord Chancellor who, with infamous cruelty, racked with his own hands the Lady Anne Ascue "till she was nigh dead." About half a mile down the stream stands the "ancient market-towne of Tytchfyelde," as the Lord Chancellor names it in his will, a market-town even in the days of the Conqueror, in the parish church of which repose the ashes of Wriothesley and of his successors, one of whom will be for ever famous as the friend and patron of Shakespeare.

An "ancient towne" indeed, the name of which is doubtless of Celtic origin, and carries us back to the far-off period when the Meonwaras peopled the fertile valley, and fished with bone hooks in the tidal haven, and hunted deer and wild boars in the forest around. The stone implements of these early inhabitants are scattered all along the valley, and are sometimes picked up by carters and plough-boys when working in the fields. Later on the Romans settled in the valley, and left their trace in the form of thin red tiles, some of which were utilised ages afterwards by Norman builders when erecting the tower of the parish church. Then after the Romans came the Saxon invasion, when for a time civilisation perished, and the neighbouring city of Portchester was reduced to ashes. The Jutes settled along the stream, once the home of the stone-men and of the bronze-men, and in their turn were harassed and plundered by the fierce Northmen, whose black boats must have often

sailed up the tidal haven. In spite, however, of the incursions of the Danes the Jutes managed to hold their own, and at the time of the Conquest "Tichefelde" was one of the very few places in Hampshire where markets were regularly held.

The Premonstratensian Abbey mentioned by John Leland was founded by Henry III. for the sake of the souls of the royal house; and for many years the good monks said masses and served God in peace. The ghost-like figures of the brethren, in their white caps and long white cloaks, were for many generations a familiar object to the villagers, as they moved about the Abbey grounds, and looked after the fish-ponds, which may still, after so many centuries, be traced, or hawked up and down the river for herons and other wild-fowl. The good abbot too was a man of considerable importance; and more than once royal persons were entertained with due hospitality. In August, 1415, Henry V. stayed at the abbey on his way to Portchester, where he embarked for France and fought the famous battle of Agincourt. Thirty years later a more interesting event took place, for Henry VI. and Margaret of Anjou passed in royal state over the stone bridge, and were married by the abbot in the priory chapel. Thus for three hundred years the quiet life of the white canons went evenly on, with just now and then an event of more importance to break the monotony of existence, till the changing times of the Reformation, when Henry VIII. swept the priory away.

A great change must have passed over the lives and fortunes of the simple villagers when their white-robed friends were to be no more seen. The long reign of quiet monotony was broken, and bustle and activity

became the order of the day. For the abbey, with all its revenues, was granted to Thomas Wriothesley, Lord Chancellor of England, and, after the fall of Cromwell, the chief minister of the realm. And Wriothesley, Catholic though he was, began at once to convert the monastic buildings into the "righte statelie house" seen by Leland: even the sanctity of the priory chapel was not respected, but seems to have been turned either into the banqueting-hall, or into the range of stables of which the ruins may still be seen.

But Thomas Wriothesley, now created Earl of Southampton, was not destined long to enjoy the spoils of the priory. On the accession of the Protestant party to power under Edward VI. he was deprived of the chancellorship and imprisoned. On his liberation he retired into obscurity, perhaps to "Tytchfylde"; and died soon afterwards of a broken heart. His magnificent tomb stands in the south chapel of the village church, where, carved in alabaster, his life-size figure is represented in his robes of state as Lord Chancellor of England, and with the collar of the Order of the Garter about his neck, and with hands uplifted across his breast in prayer. The splendour of the Wriothesley altar tomb may in some measure be gathered from the fact that a sum equivalent to £12,000 of our money is said to have been expended upon its erection.

But the main interest of the tomb centres, not in its costly magnificence, or in the exquisite workmanship of its details, or even in the recumbent figure of the Lord Chancellor who played so large a part in the days of the Reformation, but in the fact that in the spacious vault beneath repose the ashes of Henry the

third Earl, and of Elizabeth Vernon his wife—the true "begetters," as some think, of the earlier sonnets of Shakespeare, and in some sense the originals of Romeo and Juliet. Moreover, it is well within the range of probability that Shakespeare may have visited his friend at "Tytchfylde," and wandered in the old garden "circummered with brick," and across the ancient bridge, and down the stately avenue of elms which led to the village church, where he may have gazed upon the reclining effigy of the Lord Chancellor upon the lordly tomb.

Now to enter fully into the vexed question of the sonnets would be a task far beyond the scope of the present paper; but the theory advanced by Mr. Gerald Massey some forty years ago, that the interpretation of the earlier series is to be found in the story of the courtship of Henry Wriothesley and Elizabeth Vernon, has perhaps as much to recommend it as any other; and indications are not wanting that the same lovers were in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. For that Shakespeare was on terms of the warmest intimacy with Southampton is a fact resting on the poet's own testimony. "To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, and Baron of Tichfield," Shakespeare dedicates "the first heir of his invention"—*Venus and Adonis*. This was in the year 1593, when the poet was twenty-nine, and the earl about twenty. In the following year he again dedicates to the "Baron of Tichfield," with "love without end," *The Rape of Lucrece* in a short and graceful letter which is among the few personal relics of Shakespeare that we possess.

It may have been about this time, when the earlier

sonnets were also written, that the poet received from his friend and patron the munificent sum of £1000, which he is said to have required in order to complete some intended purchase. The sonnets, it is true, were not published as a whole before 1609; but we learn from one Francis Meres that Shakespeare was already known as a sonnet-writer some years earlier. In a book entitled *Palladis Tamia*, and published in 1598, he speaks of "hony-tongued Shakespeare," and of his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, and his "sugred sonnets among his private friends." And at that time, as the dedication to *Lucrece* sufficiently testifies, Southampton was certainly a foremost figure in that privileged circle, and may therefore reasonably be supposed to have been one of the "private friends" for whom the sonnets were intended, and to whom the allusions would be clear which have since puzzled the students of Shakespeare. Now if Mr. Massey be right, and his theory is at least full of interest, the key to the interpretation of those allusions is to be found in the romantic story of the courtship of Southampton and Elizabeth Vernon.

The story is soon told. The Earl, whose father had died when he was a boy of twelve, had not been long at Court before he fell in love with "faire Mistress Vernon," a beautiful maid-of-honour to Queen Elizabeth. The lady was cousin to the Earl of Essex, and daughter of Sir John Vernon of Hodnet, near Shrewsbury. It is possible that Shakespeare was really thinking of his young friend when in the Shrewsbury camp scene in 1 *Henry IV.* he puts the following lines into the mouth of a Sir Richard Vernon:—

"I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds,
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship."

But Southampton's love for his "faire Elizabeth," whom he is reported to have "courted with too much familiarity," cost him the favour of the Queen, who, after her usual manner, bitterly opposed the marriage. At length one Sunday afternoon the lovers waited on the Queen to know her resolution in the matter, who, after the space of two hours, sent out the curt message that she was "sufficiently resolved." The Earl was further ordered to leave the Court, and the lovers parted in grief and indignation. "My Lord of Southampton," writes a Court gossip, "is much troubled at her Majesty's strangest usage of him. Mr. Secretary hath procured him licence to travel. His fair mistress doth wash her fairest face with too many tears." After a few years' absence the Earl returned, and finding the Queen still implacable, the lovers were married secretly, without her Majesty's consent. On hearing the news, about a week after the event, the Queen, it is needless to add, was furious, and threatened them both with the Tower, and even appears to have carried her threat into execution.

Now, turning to the earlier sonnets of Shakespeare, we find, first of all, the poet advising his young friend to marry:—

"Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold,"

alluding at the same time to the fact that his father was dead :—

> " Dear my love, you know
> You had a father : let your son say so."—xiii.

Then the "faire Elizabeth" comes across Southampton's vision, and the vicissitudes of true love begin. The lovers, owing partly to the Earl's imprudence in "courting with too much familiarity," but chiefly to the enmity of the Queen, are forced to part, and Southampton cries :—

> " Farewell ! thou art too dear for my possessing."
> —lxxxvii.

And again :—

> " Let me confess that we two must be twain,
> Although our undivided loves are one."—xxxvi.

He keenly feels his banishment from Court :—

> " When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state."
> . . . . . .
> —xxix.

He hastens to bed, seeking rest and finding none :—

> " But then begins a journey in my head,
> To work my mind, when body's work's expired ;
> For then my thoughts . . .
> Present thy shadow to my sightless view,
> Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
> Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.
> Lo ! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
> For thee and for myself no quiet find."—xxvii.

He travels on the Continent with a heavy heart :—

> " How heavy do I journey on my way,
> . . . . . .
> The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
> Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me."—l.

And once again :—

> "For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
> From me far off, with others all too near."—lxi.

At length, in the late autumn of the year 1598, the lovers are married, and Shakespeare celebrates the glad event in the words of the hundred and sixteenth sonnet :—

> "Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments."

And bearing in mind the interpretation of the earlier sonnets an unexpected light is shed upon several passages in *Romeo and Juliet*, which seem unmistakably to show that the story of his friend's courtship was in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote the tragedy. The striking simile employed in the twenty-seventh sonnet, where Elizabeth Vernon's beauty is compared to "a jewel hung in ghastly night," which "makes black night beauteous," is again used in the tragedy, where Romeo, on first seeing Juliet, exclaims :—

> "It seems she hangs upon the cheeks of night
> Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear ;
> Beauty too rich for use."

And remembering that Southampton's mother was the daughter of "fair Viscount Montague," the question of Juliet becomes at once significantly suggestive :—

> "Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?"

Again, on the supposition that Southampton is the original of Romeo, the following passage, which has greatly perplexed commentators, becomes evident :—

"*Nurse.* Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?"

Romeo. Ay, nurse ; what of that? Both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R. is for the dog. No; I know it begins with *some other letter;* and she hath the prettiest sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

Romeo. Commend me to thy lady."

The "some other letter," which Juliet plays with to the confusion of the garrulous old lady, is evidently —if our theory be correct—W., and the "name" is Wriothesley. And these allusions, like those in the sonnets, would be at once understood and appreciated among the "private friends" of the "hony-tongued Shakespeare."

These considerations cannot but give lasting interest, not only to the magnificent shrine in which the ashes of Romeo and Juliet repose, but also to the remains of the "right statelie house" to which, after so many vicissitudes, the young Earl brought his beautiful bride. Across the ancient bridge the cavalcade must have wended its way in single file, and up the noble avenue till it entered the precincts of the old monastic garden, and passed under the "goodly gate" into the "court" beyond, where the "conducte castelid" stood; above, over the mullioned window of the gateway, the grinning face of a corbel (still remaining) looked approvingly down, while the "faire Elizabeth" was led by Southampton into her stately home, which was to be to her, alas! the scene of many sorrows.

For the Countess was not destined to "feed on the roses and to lie in the lilies of life." Within three years of her marriage the Earl was arrested and flung into the Tower on the charge of high treason in connection with the rising of Essex. He was even condemned to death, and for some weeks his head was in

danger. At length the pleading of his friends was so far successful that the Queen was induced to commute the sentence to imprisonment for life. So in the Tower the Earl languished, while his Countess remained at Titchfield, until the death of Elizabeth, when, on the order of James I., Southampton was pardoned and liberated. The poets hastened to congratulate the great patron of literature, while Shakespeare greeted his "dear boy" in the words of the hundred and seventh sonnet.

Then a few years later, on "Januarye 5, 1615," the Countess lost her fourth daughter, "ye Ladie Mayre Wryotheslie," at the tender age of four years and four months, and the parents laid "ye bodie" in the spacious vault beside the coffin of the Lord Chancellor, and placed in the south wall of the chapel an effigy of their little one, who is represented as sleeping the sleep of death. As Shakespeare said of Juliet:—

> "Death lies on her like an untimely frost
> Upon the sweetest flower of all the field."

Another sorrow befell the "faire Elizabeth" in 1621, when in consequence of his opposition to the Court, and especially to the Duke of Buckingham, Southampton was again imprisoned, when we are told that "the Countess of Southampton, assisted by some two more countesses, got up a petition to the King, that her lord might answer before himself, which they say His Majesty granted." But the cruellest blow of all fell upon the beautiful Countess three years later, when her husband and his eldest son both died in Holland —poisoned, it was said, by order of the infamous Buckingham. Their bodies were embalmed, or per-

haps, as local tradition has it, preserved in some spirituous liquor, and brought in a small boat to England, and landed at Southampton. Then the remains were taken by road to Titchfield, about ten miles distant, and received by the broken-hearted Countess beneath the stately gate-house, where, not twenty-five years before, the grinning corbel had welcomed her as a bride. A few days later, on Innocents' Day, December 28, the two coffins, covered, it is believed, with crimson cloth, were laid in the family vault beneath the splendid monument.

The Countess survived her lord for many years, and continued to reside at Titchfield, where, in 1637, a granddaughter was born, and christened "Rachel." The child was brought up probably under the care of her grandmother at Place House, and played in the old walled garden and about the monastic fish-ponds, and on Sundays gazed in wonderment at the magnificent monument of her ancestors in the parish church, and learnt her lessons, it may be, at the knee of the "faire Countess," whose face now showed the traces of sorrow and of years. This little girl, the granddaughter of Romeo and Juliet, became famous in after years as the noble and devoted wife of Lord William Russell who was executed by Charles II. It is interesting to notice that her celebrated *Letters* contain several allusions to her early home.

When Rachel was about ten years old an event happened which must have engraved itself deeply upon her memory. Towards evening one dull November afternoon, when the fog lay heavily along the course of the river Meon, and the drive beneath the avenue was thickly strewn with fallen leaves, two horsemen were seen to cross the bridge, and to ride

up to the entrance of the hall. The Earl was away from home, but the visitors were immediately admitted, and one of them proved to be none other than Charles I.

The King, it appeared, fearing danger, had secretly left Hampton Court by a back staircase the evening before, and accompanied only by Mr. Ashburnham, Sir John Berkley, and Mr. Legge, had ridden throughout the stormy night as far as the village of Sutton in Hampshire, where at daybreak a relay of horses awaited them. Setting off again immediately, for a Committee of Roundheads was assembled in the very inn at which they alighted, the party proceeded towards the coast, till when near Southampton the King called a halt to consider the situation. It was finally decided that Mr. Ashburnham and Sir John Berkley should take boat for the Isle of Wight in order to sound Colonel Hammond the Governor, while Charles, accompanied by Mr. Legge, should proceed to Titchfield, and there await the result of the negotiations. Unfortunately for the King, his friends performed their mission unskilfully. They agreed to Hammond's "Engagement," that if the King "pleased to put himself into his hands, what he could expect from a person of honour and honestie, His Majesty should have it made good by him," and even allowed the Governor, together with the "Captaine of Cowes Castle and their two servants" to "embarque" with them for the mainland.

The party landed at the mouth of the river Meon, and passing over a bridge, still known as Hammond's bridge, "we were together," says Ashburnham, "till we came to Titchfield Towne, when I desired to go before to the Lord of Southampton's, and acquaint

His Majesty with what had happened." In one of the lofty rooms of Place House, Charles was anxiously awaiting his arrival, and when Ashburnham had told his story, the King, "with a very severe and reserved countenance, the first of that kinde to me, said that notwithstanding the engagement, Hee verily believed the Governor would make him a prisoner." At length, after "walkeing some few turnes in the Roome," and recognising the hopelessness of the situation, he commanded that the Governor should be called up. When Hammond appeared, His Majesty accepted the Engagement, but added that he desired him to remember that "Hee was to be judge of what was honourable and honest." "After two houres stay more," says Ashburnham, "His Majesty took boate and went to the Isle of Wight."

It was a sad going-away that little Rachel Wriothesley witnessed that November day, when Charles I., accompanied by Colonel Hammond and the "Captaine of Cowes Castle," passed beneath the grinning corbel of the gate-house, and down the leafless avenue of elms, to the lonely spot at the mouth of the Titchfield Haven where he "tooke boate for the Isle of Wight." For on leaving Titchfield the King was virtually a prisoner, and the last act of the long tragedy had begun, which ended just fourteen months later, when in the Chapel of St. George's, Windsor, the decapitated body of Charles I. was secretly laid to rest, in the presence of Rachel's father and of three other noblemen.

In more modern times, after the Southampton family had become extinct, Place House passed into the possession of strangers; and in the last century Fox and Pitt were more than once entertained there by the beautiful Lady Betty Delmè, whose celebrated

RUINS OF PLACE HOUSE, TITCHFIELD

portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds was sold a few years ago for the large sum of eleven thousand guineas.

The "righte statelie house," as we have said, is now in ruins; but the gate-house remains, and the other parts of the mansion can quite easily be traced. Two sundials still stand forth from the lofty turrets, as in the days of Lord Chancellor Wriothesley. Across several of the mullioned windows the old iron bars remain, and afford resting-places to the multitude of starlings and jackdaws which make the ruin their home. The garden is still "circummured with brick," as Shakespeare has it, but the paths and "alleys" and "knots" are gone. It is no longer a "curious-knotted garden"; not a single flower-bed remains. But within those garden walls Edward VI. must have walked, when at Place House he tried to recruit his ruined health in the summer of 1552. Here, too, Queen Elizabeth must have strolled when she visited the second Earl in days before Henry Wriothesley was born. Within these walls the children and grandchildren of Romeo and Juliet played; and Shakespeare, it may be, wandered with his friend through the "thick-pleached alleys," and watched the woodpeckers at work in the rotten trees, and noticed the "crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long-purples" blooming in the meadow beyond. Up and down the garden Charles I. may have paced on that fateful November day when he waited in an agony of suspense for the return of Ashburnham from the Isle of Wight. All is changed now; purple snap-dragons are growing on the crumbling garden walls, with yellow stonecrop, and here and there a tuft of polypody fern; while owls and kestrels lay their eggs

in the ivy-mantled towers, and sparrows chirp merrily in the ruined hall.

Such are some of the changes which have passed over the "Ancient Market-Towne" in the course of centuries. The "heathy ground mixt with ferne," mentioned by Leland in 1540, when he visited Mr. Wriothesley's house, and of which the greater part of the parish then consisted, remained in pretty much the same condition as he saw it till within recent years, when the soil was discovered to be good for the cultivation of strawberries. And now most of the "heathy ground" has been broken up and measured out into garden-plots; and where the Royal fern—*Osmunda Regalis*—once abounded, and black game might be seen, are acres of strawberry plants. Still much rough ground and wild stretches of country remain, especially towards the sea, and rare wild-flowers and uncommon birds may occasionally be met with.

In the dense reed-beds that fringe the river the beautiful nests of the reed-warbler may be found, suspended between three or four tall stems, and waving in the wind. Numbers of gulls visit the haven, and several species of wild-duck, and the common cormorant, and other sea-fowl. Even the redshank occasionally lays its eggs in the thick tussocks of grass which abound in the marshes; while on the seashore, among the stones of the beach, the ringed dotterel deposits her eggs, and difficult indeed are they to find, so exactly do they resemble the pebbles around. Near Hammond's Bridge, built, as tradition affirms, with materials from the old monastery, a few plants of the beautiful "summer snowflake" still remain. Some years ago, before people took to transplanting it into their gardens, this rare plant was not uncommon along

the river-banks as far as the priory garden, from which possibly it originally escaped. Now it is confined to this one spot, where it maintains a precarious existence, and will doubtless soon be gone. In this manner our rarer and more beautiful wild-flowers become extinct, and civilisation converts our "commons" into strawberry beds and potato plots, and drives away the black game from the "heathy ground"; while the haunts of the wild-fowl are yearly becoming more encroached upon, and before long it may be the weird cry of the peewit will be heard no more in the desolate marshes which skirt the haven by the sea.

A VILLAGE BY THE SEA

PORTCHESTER

THE parish consists of nearly three thousand acres, of which about one-half is land and the other half mud or water, according to the condition of the tide. The land portion is of a strangely diversified character. Surrounded on three sides by the mud flats of the harbour, most of the land lies low, and is only protected from inundation during the spring tides by means of artificial chalk banks raised some five or six feet above the level of the shore. On the east, where the banks are highest and where, in spite of every precaution, the marshy pasture is more or less under water, salterns once ranged, and formed a considerable source of profit to the villagers. The arable portion of the parish, with the exception of two or three small farms, is now divided into market-gardens, which produce an immense quantity of vegetables for the neighbouring town.

An extensive chalk down, locally known as "the hill," rises at the back of the village to the height of three hundred feet, and shields the gardens from the keen north winds. In the harbour are two small islands, Horsea and Pewty, which form part of the parish. The parish is also proud in the possession of an ancient castle, dating back to Roman times, which affords a famous shelter to various kinds of birds. The mighty Norman keep, rising one hundred

feet above the low marshy ground, is a conspicuous object in the landscape, and throws its spell over the whole neighbourhood.

In olden days the appearance of the parish was entirely different from what it is now. At the time of the Domesday "record" about three hundred acres only were under some rough sort of cultivation. As late as the sixteenth century the larger part of the parish was covered with oak and beech and brushwood, where the peasants had free pasture and "pannage" for swine. Open marshes, covered with water at every high tide, skirted the shore, and sheltered thousands of wild-fowl which, in bad weather, congregated in the harbour. A number of widgeon, called "wygones" in an old document, and so many quarters of salt from the village salt-pits, were the regular payments to the king's treasury. Red-deer roamed in the forest, and often descended from the long chalk ridge, then covered with gorse and dotted here and there with yew-trees, to drink at the clear spring of fresh water which still rises in the meadow below. The timber has now all disappeared; not a copse, hardly a clump of trees, remains; the marshes are converted into rough pasture; the wild-fowl, except in very severe weather, are seldom seen; the last of the red-deer was killed by the "Waltham Blacks" at the beginning of the eighteenth century; and the poetry and romance of the ancient ruin, with its stories of royal visitors, of unhappy captives pining in the Norman dungeons, of tournaments and falconry, of French prisoners and of military deserters, has almost entirely disappeared.

Yet for all lovers of country life, for the botanist and the naturalist, the parish is still full of interest.

A severe winter brings to the shelter of the harbour, and the reed-beds and sedges of the marsh, a number of strange visitors. The beautiful snow bunting will be seen in small flocks along the shore, and bramblings mix with the sparrows and finches in the farmyard. The harbour will be full of gulls, the common gull, the kittiwake, the herring-gull, the greater and the lesser black-backed gull, in vast numbers. Flocks of duck, becoming wilder and wilder as the gunners continue to harass them, will congregate in the harbour; and wild geese and perhaps a few wild swans may pass over. In addition to the commoner kinds of wild-fowl, such as the mallard and the widgeon and the beautiful little teal, rarer sorts are occasionally met with. Pochards and scoters and tufted ducks will be brought in, and perhaps a few sheldrakes and golden-eyes. It is not unlikely that a great northern diver may visit the harbour, and both the merganser and the smew have been seen. In the hard winter of 1890–91 a splendid specimen of an osprey was shot off Horsea Island, in the act of plunging into the water after a fish; and a bittern which had taken refuge in the reed-bed of the marsh was unfortunately put up and killed.

During a prolonged frost, especially if there be much snow on the ground, the smaller birds suffer severely. Hundreds of birds perished during the long spell of frost which occurred a few winters ago. Within the castle enclosure, among the ruins, in crevices of the walls, among the ivy and rank herbage, their dead bodies, stiff and frozen, were found. In one hole of the Roman masonry six dead birds—two starlings, three thrushes, and a redwing—lay huddled together. Close by, in another crevice,

lay a dead linnet; and in the coarse grass below, a skylark and a hedge-sparrow were picked up, together with a wren, and some dozen thrushes and starlings. All along under the Roman wall dead birds were found, lying in holes and crannies into which they had crept for shelter from the icy wind outside. Altogether more than fifty birds, chiefly thrushes and starlings and redwings, were picked up about the ancient ruins.

Many years ago a colony of black-headed gulls had their breeding-place in our parish. The spot is still known as Peewit or Pewty Island, "peewit" being the old name for this species of gull. It appears from an old document that the sale of the young birds, then accounted a great delicacy, realised as large a sum as forty pounds per annum. The "gullery" has of course been long since deserted, but it is interesting to remember that the parish once numbered among its inhabitants a colony of "peewits." On the spot where the gulls nested, and along the shore of Horsea Island, the eggs of the ringed plover are occasionally found. In the coarse herbage that covers the sea-banks the grasshopper warbler and the shore-pipit build their nests, and every year a pair of red-backed shrikes bravely endeavour to rear their young in a tall quickset hedge, almost the only one now left in the parish. The entire destruction of all hedgerows and the uprooting of every tree, which marks the progress of market-gardening, is of itself sufficient to explain the scarcity of our songsters and smaller birds.

The number of wild-flowers to be found in the parish is remarkable. The chalk down, the gardens, the salt marshes, the shore, the "cribs" covered with water at every high tide, all yield a separate flora of

their own. Even the old ruins of the castle produce plants which would be sought for in vain elsewhere. Every spring the grey walls are gay with the pale yellow blossoms of the wild wallflower, which grows in profusion all over the Roman masonry. Later on the deep red flowers of the spur valerian make a fine show on the top of the broken battlements. A few noble spikes of the great yellow mullein will also be seen here and there among the ruins. The dark sword-shaped leaves of the *Iris fœtidissima* shoot up abundantly beneath the shelter of the Roman wall, and in winter the beautiful scarlet seeds are very conspicuous. A few plants of the common balm may perhaps be noticed on one spot, survivals of the old monastic herb-garden. For a monastery once existed within the castle walls. The buildings have disappeared, but the priory church remains, and the cloisters may yet be traced. Moreover, one plant still flourishes which is probably to be attributed to the days of the Austin canons. A large patch of "common alexanders" puts up year by year its smooth, shining, pale green foliage. The plant was formerly a famous pot-herb, known from the colour of its roots as the "black pot-herb," and is still found beneath old priory walls.

It is curious how some plants seem to love the neighbourhood of churchyards. Such a species is the wild sage or clary, a labiate plant, from one to two feet high, and carrying in a spike whorls of dark blue flowers. It is common in our churchyard, but not a plant is to be found outside the walls. In former years it appears to have been the custom to plant the wild sage, which was supposed to possess many virtues, in churchyards. At any rate, it is worthy of notice that Pepys, when on his travels in this part

of the country, "observed a little churchyard, where the graves are accustomed to be all sowen with sage."

In the meadow on the other side of the Roman wall a host of golden daffodils dance and flutter in the breeze every spring, having perhaps originally escaped from some cottage garden. Such, however, was not the case with a colony of wild tulips which still continues to flourish in the parish. The wild plant is quite distinct from the garden varieties, and possesses a delicious fragrance which may be detected at some distance. Almost extinct in the south of England, it may still be found in one or two localities. In the "park" or meadow below Gilbert White's old house at Selborne, the long narrow leaves come up sparingly every year, but the bulbs seldom put forth a flower. In a chalk-pit not far from Selborne a few flowers may be gathered at the right season; while in our parish the bulbs blossom abundantly every year.

A stroll along the sea-banks in summer, with the tide on one hand and the salt marshes on the other, is interesting to the naturalist. Wheatears frequent the banks, and perhaps a kingfisher may be seen. The chatter of the sedgebird will be heard in the reed beds, and at any rate some noteworthy plant will be met with. Wild beet is abundant all along the shore. This plant, known among the villagers as wild spinach, is the origin of our garden beetroot and of the mangel-wurzel of our fields. The young shoots and leaves are often gathered in spring and used as a substitute for spinach. On one spot in the parish a considerable quantity of the real samphire may be found, growing, not, as is usually the case, on rocks or cliffs, but among the shingle on the shore just out of reach of the flowing tide.

In the marshes, at certain seasons of the year bright with the beautiful flowers of the sea lavender, not far from a dark reedy pool, which in winter-time is a favourite haunt of wild-duck, several interesting plants have their home. In the swampy pasture beside the pool, if diligent search be made exactly at the right season, the uncommon little fern known as the adder's-tongue will be found. This curious and delicate plant, with its simple egg-shaped frond and solitary fruit-spike shoots up every year among the rank herbage of the marsh, and after a brief sojourn again disappears. Later on, especially in wet summers, two handsome and conspicuous grasses, nearly related to each other, appear in considerable plenty beside the pool. Their family name is *Polypogon* or beard grass, so called from the nature of their spike-like panicles, which are long and silky. And the plants are as rare as they are beautiful. Only in our parish, and in a salt marsh just beyond its borders, are they found within the area of the county. But there on the same spot, beside the same sedgy pool, have those two grasses flourished for centuries. On the chalk hill several species of orchids may be found. In some seasons the beautiful bee-orchis is abundant; and on one spot the fly-orchis comes up every May. The down in places is covered with the curious trailing root-parasite, the bastard toad-flax; while in a chalk pit hard by several noble plants of the dwale or deadly nightshade come up every year.

From the hill a fine view of the parish is obtained. How peaceful it looks, with the smoke of cottage chimneys rising up between the trees! The long village street is as old as the days of the Romans, whose legions must have often traversed it. Then

the Saxons came, and destroyed every vestige of civilisation; not a stone of the Christian basilica was left standing, not a square yard of tessellated pavement was left intact. Later, the black boats of the Northmen appeared in the tidal haven, bringing death and destruction with them. Later still, Duke Robert landed with his Norman knights beside the Roman ruin and passed up the village street, and over the hill, and through the forest beyond, towards the gates of Winchester. And after Duke Robert came other Normans, masons and artificers, hewers of timber and stone, who built that lofty keep, which for many a century overawed the neighbourhood.

Then, for a brief period, a company of Norman monks, with a good prior at their head, said Mass daily in the church below for the sinful soul of the Red King, and ministered to the sick and dying in the mud huts and hovels around. But heartsick at the riot and wickedness around them, they built themselves another home over the hill, in the midst of a silent wood, beside the murmur of a gentle stream, where they could perform their devotions, and catch their fish in gladness and singleness of heart. Then came the awful days of King Stephen, when, in the words of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Castle was "filled with devils and evil men"; after this it became a royal residence and was frequently "defiled" by the presence of King John.

In the month of August, 1415, all the chivalry of England passed down our village street when Henry V. embarked at the Roman watergate for France, where three months later he gained the victory of Agincourt. On the same spot, some thirty years afterwards, landed the masterful Margaret of Anjou,

and with her splendid retinue passed to the Priory of Titchfield, where in the chapel, now in ruins, she was married by the Prior to King Henry VI. It is possible, as tradition asserts, that on one of her royal progresses Queen Elizabeth honoured the Castle with her presence, and feasted with her courtiers in the stately banqueting hall, while minstrels played in the gallery, as in the old days when the good Philippa was queen.

But with the last strains of the minstrels' music a silence falls upon the Castle for many a year, broken again in the days of the great war by the arrival of hundreds of Dutch and French prisoners. At one time several thousand prisoners of war were confined there. The village was full of soldiers; and the monotony of country life was broken. Attempts at escape on the part of the prisoners were frequent, and now and then a public execution took place. With the declaration of peace after the battle of Waterloo, the prisoners returned to their own country, and owls and jackdaws visited the deserted ruin.

As the great town enlarges its borders it draws nearer and nearer to our parish. In another fifty years it will probably have reached us. And then much of the interest of the old place will be gone. The walls of Roman masonry will doubtless be left standing, and the Norman keep will tower for perhaps another century or two above the mud flats and the flowing tide. But the glory of the parish will have departed. The wild-fowl will no more visit the harbour-shore. In very hard winters when the ponds and lakes are ice-bound they will again seek, as their ancestors have done for centuries, the open salt water of the harbour, but they will only look and pass on.

Choice wild-flowers will be searched for in vain; the so-called improvements of town life will drain the last patch of marshland where once the teal and widgeon congregated in countless numbers, and the beautiful beard-grass will be gone. The samphire will go with it, and the adder's-tongue; and *Dianthus armeria*, the Deptford pink, will no longer open its beautiful crimson petals on the rough stretch of marshy waste which borders the vicar's glebe beside the ancient mill.

FRENCH PRISONERS AT PORTCHESTER

In the early part of the last century, when England was engaged in a deadly struggle with Napoleon, an immense number of French prisoners of war were incarcerated in various parts of the country. In the year 1811 it is calculated that not less than fifty thousand Frenchmen were prisoners in England. Of this enormous number the prison at Dartmoor, built by the Government in 1809 for their reception, held as many as ten thousand unfortunate men, who pined in vain for the sunnier climes of France. "For seven months in the year," wrote one of them, "it is a vraie Sibérie, covered with unmelting snow. When the snows go away, the mists appear. Imagine the tyranny of perfide Albion in sending human beings to such a place." Others were lodged in Mill Bay Prison, near Plymouth, and on board prison-ships moored in Hamoaze. Other prison-ships lay in the Medway off Chatham, and at other convenient stations along the coast. But Hampshire appears to have received the greater number of the foreigners. French officers on parole were scattered throughout the smaller country towns, such as Odiham, Whitchurch, Bishop's Waltham, Andover, and Alresford where in the churchyard several tombstones erected to the

memory of those who died in captivity may be seen. In the neighbourhood of Portsmouth at least twenty thousand French prisoners were confined, some at Forton, near Gosport, and some, from eight to ten thousand, in Portchester Castle; while a number of old hulks, originally warships captured from the enemy, and made to accommodate some five or six hundred prisoners each, were moored in Portchester creek, between the castle walls and the mouth of the harbour.

It is of the French prisoners at Portchester that we propose mainly to speak in the present paper. The outlines of the ancient castle, as seen from the train between Fareham and Cosham, are well known to travellers on the London and South-Western Railway. The mighty Norman keep, rising one hundred feet from the water's edge at high tide, is an imposing feature in the prospect. But the extent and grandeur of the ruins can only be estimated by a nearer inspection. The outside walls, varying from twenty to forty feet in height, are beyond question of Roman construction, and enclose an area of about nine acres. In the north-west corner of this enclosure stands the lofty keep, around which cluster the remains of Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor buildings. In the days of its glory the royal castle of Portchester was a place of considerable importance. Here kings and queens held their court with much feasting, and tilting tournaments took place in the great square, and hawking parties rode forth beneath the Norman gateway. Here, for a time, dwelt a community of monks whose duty it was to say mass daily for the soul of the Red King in the priory church, which is still standing within its walls. Here, too, in the damp dungeons of

the keep, many a political prisoner lay in darkness and despair, and not a few executions took place on the green outside. But after the days of Queen Elizabeth the castle, being no longer required as a military fortress, passed into the hands of private owners, and quickly fell into a state of ruinous dilapidation. It appears to have been entirely unoccupied, and for a considerable period an almost total silence rests upon the ruins.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the castle again emerges into the light of history as a depôt for the safe keeping of prisoners of war. For this purpose it possessed many and peculiar advantages. The investing Roman walls completely enclosed the square within, together with the Norman and Tudor buildings, and thereby rendered escape almost impossible. This square, moreover, was of considerable size, consisting, as we have said, of some nine acres, while the keep and other buildings could easily be made to accommodate a large number of men. Situated, too, at the head of Portsmouth harbour, and surrounded on two sides by the flowing tide, prisoners could be carried up at high water to the very walls of the castle, into which admittance was gained through the ancient Roman water-gate.

The castle was accordingly taken over by the War Office, and preparations were hurried forward for the reception of French prisoners. Fortunately, there are in the writer's possession a collection of old engravings which clearly indicate the work done for the accommodation of the unhappy captives. Several prints, under date "April 1733," depict the castle in a state of silent desolation—a solitary horse is feeding in the great enclosure, where the rank herbage almost

hides from view great blocks of fallen masonry. The Norman keep appears in almost exactly the same condition as we see it to-day, but the buildings around are in a more perfect state of preservation. Turrets are standing which have now entirely disappeared, while the mullions of several of the decorated windows remain. Later prints, engraved respectively in 1761 and 1782, show the castle in the same deserted condition, but the buildings are in a state of greater decay, and large trees, probably elders, are growing from the summit of the broken battlements. Two years later, however, a small engraving, dated June 30, 1784, showing a sentinel on guard outside the Roman walls, records the fact that the castle had again become a centre of military occupation.

It was about this time that the Government determined to convert the ancient ruin into a military depôt for prisoners of war. The silence which had long settled upon it was now rudely broken. Large quaint-looking wooden barracks, as shown in another old print, with staircases outside and covered balconies, were quickly run up in the great square of the castle; and the Norman keep was converted into sleeping quarters for the prisoners. This lofty tower was divided into five stories, connected with a wooden staircase which ran up one side of it. Until quite lately part of the framework in some of these compartments was remaining, to which the hammocks of eighteen hundred prisoners were suspended. "It may be understood," says an eye-witness, "that the men's sleeping-quarters were not luxurious. Some of them had hammocks, but when the press grew thicker straw was thrown upon the floor for those to sleep upon for whom hammock room could not be found. But hard

PORTCHESTER CASTLE
(1799)

as was the lot of the Portchester prisoners, it was comfort compared with that of the men immured at Forton, where there was hardly room to stand in the exercise ground, and they lay at night as thick as herrings in a barrel; or with those who were confined on the hulks, which were chiefly used as punishment ships, where the refractory and desperate were sent, and where half-rations brought them to reason and obedience. At Portchester the prisoners got at least plenty of fresh air, sunshine, and room to walk about." Outside the castle walls, the ancient moat, which during long years of neglect had become choked with rubbish, was cleared out and filled with water, beyond which other barracks were erected for the militia regiments on guard.

The ordinary number of prisoners confined in the castle during the French war was about eight thousand, while the hulks in the harbour—the *Prothée*, *San Damaso*, *Sultan*, *Captivity*, *Vigilant*, *Fortanée*, and others, were crowded with them. In the castle were confined, among other prisoners, the French and negro garrisons of St. Vincent; those captured in Lord Howe's celebrated victory of "the First of June"; eighteen hundred Dutch seamen taken at the battle of Camperdown; the French galley-slaves who, with General Tate, were captured at Fishguard in Wales; together with hundreds of soldiers and seamen captured by our cruisers on the coast of Ireland, in the West Indies, and elsewhere. A few notable prisoners were among them. Tallien, who played so infamous a part in the bloody orgies of the French Revolution, was at Portchester for a short time; and General d'Hilliers, an officer in high favour with Napoleon; and Fongaret, the daring leader of Charette's vanguard; while among

the unfortunate captives were the youthful son of the Duke de Montmorency, and the French painter, Louis Garneray, who spent eight weary years on board the prison-ship *Prothée* before he was released on parole.

Many were the devices resorted to by the unfortunate captives in order to while away the tedious time. A large number of French names carved on the stone walls of the Norman keep still bear eloquent witness to the irksomeness of their captivity. Some of the prisoners were very expert carvers, and fashioned out of beef and mutton bones the most beautiful toys. Some of these trinkets, carved only with a penknife, are still in existence in the neighbourhood—models of ships, even of three-deckers with sails and colours flying, windmills, tops, dolls, spinning-wheels, small bone playing-cards in bone boxes, dominoes, and chessmen, of which the writer has some fine specimens. Others would make out of the straw supplied for their bedding beautiful little boxes and watch-cases, and straw mats of geometrical design. Occasionally, once or twice a week perhaps, a portion of the castle enclosure would be thrown open to visitors, many of whom were eager to purchase from the prisoners their toys and trinkets. On these occasions kindly disposed people would bring with them large bones and other material for carving, which they would pass to these skilful mechanics through the wooden palisade which fenced off their quarters. Some of the prisoners, too, made large quantities of most delicate lace, for which they found a ready market among the fair visitors to the castle. Owing, however, to some trade jealousy, the authorities endeavoured to stop its manufacture, and issued an order that within fourteen days all lace-making imple-

ments were to be given up. It appears, however, that the cunning Frenchmen still continued to make it clandestinely, either at night after the curfew had sounded, or in some secret spot in the great tower, which afforded many tempting places of concealment. Here, too, as at Forton and Plymouth, forged bank-notes may have been manufactured, large numbers of which, and of counterfeit seven-shilling pieces, were circulated in the neighbourhood, through the medium, it was supposed, of soldiers on guard acting in collusion with the prisoners. One Frenchman, named François Dutard, was sentenced to death for forging notes, but his sentence was commuted to two years' imprisonment at Winchester.

The days when the castle court was thrown open to the public were indeed red-letter days in the monotonous lives of the prisoners. Many, as we have seen, embraced the opportunity of selling their handiwork; others endeavoured, by songs and music and juggling exhibitions, to make a few honest pence in order to purchase eggs or butter or other luxuries, which on these occasions were brought to the castle by the country folk around. The presence of visitors was, further, a break in the dreary monotony of life, hours of which were spent daily by the prisoners in draughts and dominoes and backgammon, and sometimes in more exciting games of chance. Many of the Frenchmen were inveterate gamblers, and would even stake their food and clothing. One man at least is reported to have died of starvation, having gambled away eight days' provisions in advance. Theatrical entertainments were also occasionally arranged by the prisoners, and one Borchiampe, formerly a sergeant-major in General Dupont's corps, whose hand had

been disabled in battle, greatly distinguished himself in this direction.

In spite of the precautions taken to prevent the escape of the prisoners, such incidents were not unknown. We have already pointed out that the position of the castle rendered escape exceptionally difficult. Then at least one hundred sentries were posted every night in and around the castle, while at a certain hour the curfew was sounded, when the prisoners had to retire to their sleeping quarters, and when all lights had to be extinguished. The prisoners, moreover, by way of identification, wore conspicuous yellow jackets with grey and yellow caps. And yet occasionally escapes were effected, as the following extracts will show. One Sunday morning, just as service had begun in Portchester church, the sentry on duty at the water-gate noticed three naval officers, in full uniform, coming towards him from the churchyard. He naturally concluded that, having seen their men safely into church, they were about to take a morning walk. So he "presented arms," and let them pass through the water-gate to the shore outside the castle walls. On the following morning three dashing privateer captains, who had been taken while cruising against our West Indian trade, were found to be missing! There was one French seaman "confined" in the castle, who, for a mere frolic or a trifling wager, would scale the walls within a few feet of the sentries, and make his way into the woodlands to the north of Portsdown Hill, where he would ramble at large, until his depredations among the cottagers provoked their anger and led to his recapture and return to prison. This man's name was François Dufresne. His term of captivity was

in all about five years; but, says one who was living in the village at the time, "he was often prowling about in the forests around when supposed by his keepers to be quietly lodged in the castle. His custom when at large was to approach a cottage in the morning when its male inmates would be in the fields; if he happened to find them at home he would ask, with all due humility, for a crust and a drink of water; but if the dame only was within, he would dash into her larder, pounce upon her bread, cheese, and bacon, and scamper off with his prey into the cover of the forest. These pranks filled the neighbourhood with a thousand tales of his doings. Provoked at last by his predatory larcenies, the peasants would assemble in numbers near his haunts, a general hunt would ensue, and Dufresne would be brought back to the castle maimed with stones, or lacerated with buckshot from the guns of his pursuers." The same writer tells a story of the attempted escape of eighteen Spanish seamen. Beneath one of the towers in the inner court a large low irregular vault may still be seen. Here on a certain night the desperadoes had assembled, armed with sharp daggers, which they had made out of horseshoe files, intending in due season to sally forth, assassinate the sentries, and make their escape over the wall. But, as often happened, treachery had been busy among the captives, and full information had been given to the authorities. So, "about midnight, a strong body of prison police, bearing lighted torches, and supported by a guard with fixed bayonets, crawled on hands and knees into the dungeon (which was the only mode of entering it) and there discovered the desperadoes in perfect readiness for the attempt. At sight of their daggers, which

they endeavoured to conceal among the rubbish, it was with difficulty that the soldiers were restrained from putting them to the bayonet. They were immediately put in irons and sent on board a prison-ship, there to atone on half-rations for their intended mischief." From these hulks in the harbour attempts to escape were, we learn, much more frequent. In the year 1806 "seven French prisoners cut a hole in the side of the *Crown* prison-ship at Portsmouth. Six of them were taken at once; the other supposed drowned." On October 8, 1818, "two French prisoners escaped from a prison-ship at Portsmouth at night: one was drowned; the other was found in the mud and sent back to the ship from whence he had escaped." The last extract is specially interesting, as the unfortunate captive was the marine painter, Louis Garneray, whose name we have already mentioned, and who was afterwards released on parole, and lived for some years at Bishop's Waltham.

It will be easily understood that among the large number of captives confined in the castle and in the hulks were many men of dangerous character, and acts of savagery were only too frequent among them. An informer being discovered on board the *Prothée* in Portsmouth harbour, he was seized by his fellow-prisoners, and tattooed on the face with the terrible sentence, "This villain betrayed his brethren to the English." Maddened with agony and shame, the poor wretch, when released by his tormentors, rushed on deck and tried to leap overboard, but fell and broke his leg. He afterwards entered the English service, being afraid to return to his own country. Here is another extract. "In November 1796, the prisoners on board the *Hero* prison-ship detected a thief in their midst.

They accordingly tied him down to a ring on the deck, and flogged him most unmercifully. They then trampled upon him, and the man actually expired under their barbarous treatment."

Duels, as may well be imagined, were not of uncommon occurrence, and several, with fatal results, are known to have taken place within the castle of Portchester. The weapons used were of the most nondescript character. Nails, or knives, or scissor-blades fastened with string to sticks a few feet long, or even a wooden foil with a sharpened point, were made to serve the purpose with deadly effect. Several executions, too, took place within the castle walls. In July 1796, a young French seaman, named Vallérie Coffré, only twenty-two years of age, was condemned to death at Winchester for stabbing a fellow-countryman with a large cook's-knife. He is said to have heard without concern the dreadful sentence, "that on the following Monday morning he was to be taken at 4 o'clock in a post-chaise to Portchester, and there to be executed about 6 A.M., and his body to be afterwards dissected."

Sickness at times was terribly rife among the prisoners. We find, for instance, that at Forton in 1794 nearly two hundred died in a single month; while in November 1810, no less than eight hundred men were reported as sick. It was the same at Portchester. The negroes captured in the West Indies suffered the most severely. The winter which followed their arrival at the castle proved to be an exceptionally hard one, and some hundreds of them perished from the cold, while not a few of the survivors were crippled for life. It is difficult, however, to estimate the number of deaths among the prisoners, as no register of

their burials appears to have been kept; and the parish churchyard, situated within the castle walls, was not used as their place of interment. The corpses of French prisoners seem to have been buried in any waste corner of the parish, chiefly—so tradition asserts—on the strip of shore outside the castle walls, which is covered at high water by the tide. Skeletons, however, have been discovered in various parts of the parish, sometimes in considerable numbers, and generally without any indication of a coffin. These burials were done by contract, and the same coffin, so again tradition has it, served to carry numberless bodies to their burial. But while the prisoners were buried anyhow and anywhere, in the roughest possible fashion, and with the least trouble and expense, the soldiers on guard who died at Portchester were interred in the parish churchyard. And among them the mortality was great.

The majority of the prisoners are said to have been atheists, and to have openly scoffed at all forms of religious belief. It is pleasant, however, to be able to add that two French priests, who had taken refuge in England from the horrors of the Reign of Terror, and who were allowed by the British Government to reside at Portchester, succeeded in winning the respect and affection of all within the castle walls. Their names were respectively Le Bail and Le Lait, and they were ever ready, not only to give spiritual help and consolation to those who would accept their ministrations, but also to share with the more destitute prisoners their miserable pittance of fourteen shillings a week.

The enormous cost of clothing and feeding the French prisoners fell almost entirely, owing to the neglect of Napoleon, upon the British Government,

and doubtless the food was not always of the choicest description. The Frenchmen are said to have shown a great partiality for soup, which they would occasionally make out of the most unsavoury ingredients. An old resident, then drawing near his century, who well remembered as a boy the stirring times of the French prisoners, once told the writer that some of the prisoners would catch with baited hooks the rats which swarmed among the old buildings of the castle, and boil them down into soup for supper! In the year 1796 an alarming inundation occurred at Portchester, which swept away an immense quantity of provisions which had come down from London for the use of the prisoners. The account of it is thus given in *The London Chronicle* for February 9–11, 1796. "At Portchester, on the 26th ult., the wind blew a hurricane, and gave such power to the tide that it rose to a prodigious height, and having driven away the great bank between the sea and the marshes, it completely deluged the whole village, wherein the water stood at the height of many feet, forced open the doors of almost all the houses, and carried away every article of furniture that floated. The greatest sufferers were Mr. Clemmence and Mr. Hubbard, two gentlemen belonging to the castle, whose houses, from the lowness of their situations, were almost covered with water. Moreover, a large quantity of articles, which the latter had that morning received from London for the use of the French prisoners, were totally spoiled. In short, the inundation was such as exceeded everything of the kind that had before happened at that place."

After the battle of Waterloo and the abdication of Napoleon, the English Ministry, in conjunction with

the French Government, agreed to restore the prisoners to their country, on the sole condition that they would first declare their adherence to the Bourbon dynasty, in token of which they were to hoist the white flag of France on the summit of the castle tower. This proposal was extremely unpalatable to the majority of the French officers, who, in fact, absolutely refused to agree to it. The commissioners who represented the French Embassy waited the event with some anxiety from morning to evening of a long summer's day. "During that period," says an eye-witness, from whose narrative we have gathered several interesting incidents, "the prisoners in the castle appeared like a vast hive of bees about to swarm. Knots of Frenchmen, in their short yellow jackets and grey caps, covered the entire area of the castle, and argued the question of submission with all the vehemence and gesticulation common to their nation. At length, as evening approached, principle gave place to prudence. The Bonapartists made a virtue of necessity, and gave way. A loud shout of 'Vive le Roi!' proclaimed the allegiance of the prisoners to the House of Bourbon, and at the same moment the white flag of old France rose and floated over the Norman keep of Portchester."

Arrangements were at once hurried forward for the liberation of the prisoners, who a few days later embarked at the water-gate, amid loud rejoicings, for the shores of France, and by the end of June not a single Frenchman was left within the walls of Portchester Castle. For twenty years, with the exception of a short period which followed the peace of Amiens in 1802, the castle had been occupied by prisoners

of war, while at least two thousand men belonging to the various regiments on guard had been quartered in the village. But with the departure of the prisoners in the summer of 1815 the village quickly returned to its former condition of quiet and repose. The militia regiments were disbanded, and the barracks which they occupied, together with the military hospital, were pulled down. The wooden buildings inside the castle walls were cleared away, and before long the ruin reverted to its former state of silence and desolation. Once more the jackdaws returned to their ancient haunts, and owls again occupied the ivy-mantled tower, while a pair of kestrels took up their quarters in the lofty keep. Once more the grass grew rank in the great enclosure, and not a sign of the sojourn of the French prisoners remained, except the names of some of them carved on the stone walls near the summit of the Norman keep.

OLD PARISH DOCUMENTS

PORTCHESTER

An examination of church registers and old parish documents—vestry books, churchwardens' accounts, and ancient maps—often yields much interesting information, and throws a flood of light upon the ways and doings of our forefathers in the olden times. We propose in the present paper to lay before our readers the result of much careful and diligent searching among a mass of old parish documents stowed away in an ancient oak chest in the vestry of a Norman church. The church itself originally belonged to a priory of Austin canons founded at the beginning of the twelfth century. The priory has disappeared, but the cloisters against the south wall of the long and lofty nave of the church may still be traced, and the foundations of the monastic buildings often trouble the old sexton when digging graves in the churchyard.

The oldest document in the chest dates back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and is a survey of the parish in the year 1567. Great have been the changes since then; the very names of the village streets are different. In the good old times a large part of the parish was forest and common land, where the tenants had "free pasture" for "all sorts of animals," and pannage for their swine, "whether it be mast season or not." A certain oak tree, "anciently called Portchester oak,"

was the boundary of the common land in one direction, while a spot "where once a cross stood" marked it in another. The cross had disappeared in the days of Queen Elizabeth, but the ancient oak was a well-known landmark, and was doubtless some giant of the forest.

The parish registers date from the year 1608, but throughout the whole of the seventeenth century they are very fragmentary, though here and there items of interest may be picked up. The early marriage formula is usually the quaint phrase "were marry'd together"; while in the case of baptisms the hour of birth is always carefully inserted. But the most noticeable point in these early registers—of the time of James I.—is the strange custom of burying persons on the same day as that on which they died. Over and over again the entry occurs—"burryed ye same day," or "day following." The exact hour of death is always stated, and according as it occurred before or after midnight, so did the burial take place the day following or the same day. If, for instance, a death occurred in the evening the corpse would of necessity be buried on the following day, but otherwise the entry is invariably, "burryed ye same day." There is no mention of any plague or sickness, such as we sometimes find, "dy'd of the small pox" or "feaver": it was evidently the usual custom. The question suggests itself, what about the use of coffins in those days of hasty burial? The answer probably is that no coffins were used, but that the corpse was buried simply in a winding-sheet. In the rubrics of our Burial Service a total silence will be observed as regards coffins; they speak of the "corpse" and the "body," but never of the coffin; and when the rubrics

were written it is probable that coffins were not generally in use. This probability is greatly strengthened by the fact that in some ancient registers the entry occurs, "burryed in a coffin," which, had coffins been general, would have been a superfluous remark; and further by an old comment on the rubric, "while the corpse is made ready to be laid into the earth," which is explained as meaning while the body is stripped of the outer shroud or winding-sheet. And this doubtless was the usual custom in pre-Reformation days, and even as late—as the above entries seem to indicate—as the time of James I. In the days of ignorance, when aged people seldom knew their exact age, our burial register often has the following entry—"an ancient man." When death had been due to misadventure, the nature of the accident is mostly stated. Thus: "William Diddemas was kill'd by the Timber carriage;" and Thomas Deadman "by falling under the wheels of a wagon"; and "Edmund Maggrige, a sojourner here, receiv'd his death's wound by overstraining himself in lifting a piece of timber for a foolish wager"; and "Nathaniel Miller fell under the wheels of a loaded waggon and Broak Boath his legs."

The large oak chest in the vestry also contained several odd volumes of churchwardens' accounts in the days when those officials managed the parochial as well as the ecclesiastical affairs; and they reveal, in a vivid manner, the complete change which has passed over this country since the introduction of the modern Poor Law system. In the olden time each parish had its own "poor-house" where the very aged and helpless were cared for. Each parish, moreover, provided for its own paupers, clothed them, made

them a small weekly allowance, and gave them little extras in time of sickness. Hence in these "accounts" of the eighteenth century we often meet with such entries as these:—"Leather breeches, 2s. 6d.;" "a pair of pattens;" "a handkerchief for Geo. Glinn, 1s.;" "bodying a gown;" "round frocks;" "caps for Sundays;" "stays and hat for ye Wd. White." But the most frequent entry, in the way of clothing for the paupers, is of stuff called "Dowlas," which in 1764 cost 1s. 2d. an ell. We imagine that few people will know what "dowlas" is, and yet the word occurs in Shakespeare. In the scene at the Boar's Head Tavern, Eastcheap (1 *Henry IV.*, iii. 3), between Sir John Falstaff and Mistress Quickly, the latter says, "I know you, Sir John; you owe me money, Sir John; and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it; I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back." "Dowlas," cries Falstaff, "filthy dowlas; I have given them away to bakers' wives, and they have made them bolters (sieves) of them." "Now, as I am a true woman," replies the hostess, "holland of eight shillings an ell." This dowlas was a coarse sort of sacking, and was bought in large quantities by the churchwardens to make "shifts" and underclothing for the paupers under their care.

In times of sickness the paupers seem to have been treated with every consideration. Such entries as the following frequently occur: "Wine and beer for Dydemus when ill;" "a fowl in her sickness;" "a piece of veal;" "wine and spirits for Clery when sick;" "a fowl for sick paupers;" "tea and sugar for the sick in Poorhouse." In the early part of the eighteenth century we find among the paupers an aged Frenchman, who, in all probability, was originally a prisoner

of war, and who remained behind, when, after the Peace of Amiens, his countrymen returned to France. He first appears in the "Accounts" as "John the Frenchman," but is afterwards always spoken of as "French John." The parish treated him with great kindness and consideration. Besides granting him a liberal weekly allowance he had many small luxuries in his sickness. "Honey for French John," and "gin for French John," frequently occur, and sometimes the quaint entry, "English gin for French John." But even "English gin" could not keep "French John" alive; after about a year's sickness, we come across the final entry, "For the laying out of French John, 4s. 6d."

The expenses for pauper funerals contain one or two curious items. In the latter half of the eighteenth century a parish coffin cost 9s.; but this was by no means the only, or the most serious, expenditure. A shroud, probably a survival of the times when no coffin was used, was always bought, and cost four or five shillings. The "oath" or "affedevy" was 1s.; the clerk's fee, 2s. 6d.; and the black cloth, 1s.; while the women's expenses were considerable. For "washing old master Clery and laying him out, 6s."; to say nothing of the "bred, chees, and beer," or "vine and brandy," which sometimes came to six shillings more. But though the wardens and overseers were willing to pay for "shroudes" and "black cloths," and were liberal in the way of beer and brandy for the good woman who laid the paupers out, yet with practical good sense they were not going to be imposed upon. If the parish helped the paupers, the paupers must help one another. On one occasion we read of "the improper conduct of some of the paupers in refusing to

attend on some of their fellow paupers in sickness and distress." The matter was reported to the vestry, which quickly brought the refractory paupers to their senses by stopping their pay. On another occasion the following resolution was unanimously passed by the Vestry: "It was decidedly resolved that in future all description of relief whatever should be withheld and refused to be granted to all persons who may stand in need of parish relief, when the party so applying for assistance shall be in the habit of frequenting public houses, or maintaining any description or sort of dog whatever."

In the year that followed the close of the great French war, the country thickly swarmed with destitute persons, passing along the high roads from village to village. The relief of these crowds of paupers, many of them discharged soldiers and mariners, was a serious drain on many parishes. Some of these indigent persons were provided with "passes," which entitled them to some small relief, usually twopence, from the various parishes through which they passed on their way to their "place of settlement." Some idea of the number of these people may be gathered from the entries in the Churchwardens' Book, which reveal the fact that in the month of May, 1816, over 150 persons with passes were thus relieved. Later on, one winter's night near Christmas, "88 people with and without passes" were relieved, "some very badly off," and "some with sickness," to whom the churchwardens gave 5s. 1d. During the winter months of 1817–18, more than six hundred persons "with passes" passed through the village and were relieved by the churchwardens, who added the remark—"a great many more than ought to be."

In addition to the care of the poor, and the supervision of church affairs, various other duties devolved upon the churchwardens in the olden times. They had the care of the village stocks, and were bound to keep them in repair. In 1774, we learn from our documents in the oak chest that new stocks were required, and were duly erected at a cost of £2, 6s. for the woodwork, and 12s. 2d. for the ironwork. These stocks lasted for fifty years, when in 1819 one "Joseph Crimble was paid for putting up new stocks, £5, 1s. 7d. The handwork of Joseph Crimble has now entirely disappeared, but the spot where the stocks stood is pointed out, and in one or two parishes in Hampshire, as at Odiham, and at Brading in the Isle of Wight, they are still remaining, to remind a weaker generation of the manner in which a sterner age treated its rogues and vagabonds. In addition to taking an interest in the stocks, the churchwardens kept a watchful eye on the vermin in the parish. Foxes they paid for at the rate of a shilling a head, and sparrows at threepence a dozen; and once we find a single entry of no less than "113 dozen of sparrow heads." One thousand three hundred and fifty-six sparrow heads! This, of course, included all kinds of small birds, which were caught in nets, and slaughtered indiscriminately by the lads and loafers of the village. A molecatcher—one William Broncher—was also employed by the Vestry, at a yearly salary of 13s., to be paid at Easter. Hedgehogs, too, were included in the list of vermin, and were duly paid for as late as the beginning of the last century. But in the Vestry Book, under date "24 Ap., 1832," we find this resolution: "It was agreed that in future no Hedge Hogs are to be

purchased by the succeeding churchwardens." Henceforth we may hope that not only the hedgehogs but also the small birds were free from such short-sighted and ignorant persecution.

In these days of ecclesiastical decency and order, when every corner of God's house is reverently cared for, it is difficult to realise the condition of some of the country churches in the olden times. When Queen Anne came to the throne our old Norman fabric was in such a deplorable and dilapidated condition, that she issued a Treasury Warrant for its restoration, and £400 seems to have been raised for the purpose by the sale of timber in Windsor Forest. An account of this expenditure is to be found in the ancient chest, from which it appears that the re-opening of the church was celebrated amid much rejoicing. The preacher received £2 for his "exelent sermon"; the Queen's own organist composed the "misick," and received, together with "eleven musitians, vocal and instrumental," the handsome sum of £20; while the villagers had a "hogshead of strong beer in which to drink the Queen's health," at the cost of £3, 10s. In the early part of the last century, the Vestry Book often reveals the current ideas as to church decoration and improvement. In 1812, at a special meeting of the parishioners, it was ordered that "the churchwardens do immediately cause the church walls to be cleaned and whitewashed"; and the rich Norman mouldings on the arches and capitals were accordingly buried beneath a thick coating of lime! Shortly afterwards a gallery was erected at the west end of the church, when portions of the splendid Norman arch were chipped away by the workmen! This gallery was to consist of "thirteen

pews, and each party subscribing, to have one, to be determined by lot." The next entry is as follows: "The pews and pulpit to be painted; and that the churchwardens be requested to get it done in the cheapest way in their power." This they accordingly did, by employing some of the French prisoners of war, at that time confined in the castle, who painted the framework of the pews white and the panels blue. In 1824 another gallery was erected, this time at the east end of the nave, for the use of the choir, who, with fiddle and flute, led the singing of a Sunday. It was not uncommon in those happy days for one parishioner to make over to another his pew in the parish church, and the Vestry Book, when recording such transactions, usually adds, "for a certain consideration, mutually agreed upon"!

Such are some of the items of interest contained in the old parish documents stowed away in the vestry-chest. The documents, many of them, are ancient; the chest, doubtless, is more ancient still. It is believed to have been carved in the time of King Edward VI., and the original key, of curious design, is still in use. But what are three hundred and fifty years amid such old-world surroundings! The church has stood for over seven centuries; and the church is modern in comparison with the Roman walls outside. Still, the term "old" is, after all, a relative one, and a glance at the ways of our forefathers during recent centuries should not be without interest to students of parochial history.

JANE AUSTEN AT LYME

THE love of beautiful scenery was not so general a hundred years ago as it is now. Indeed, it is true, as the great Humboldt has pointed out, that what is known as "the sentimental love of Nature," is a modern rather than an ancient feeling. Socrates was accused of being unacquainted with even the neighbourhood of Athens. "I am very anxious to learn," he replied, "and from fields and trees I can learn nothing." The Apostle Paul, though he must have been familiar with some of the most enchanting scenery in Europe and Asia Minor, seems to have been unmoved by the beauties of Nature. There is hardly a word in his thirteen epistles which shows that he had the smallest susceptibility for beautiful scenery. St. Bernard, having spent a day in riding along the lovely shore of Lake Geneva, is said to have asked in the evening where it was. There is not the slightest allusion in any of Whitefield's sermons to his thirteen voyages across the Atlantic. Dr. Johnson is another example of the same strange indifference. "Sir," he said, "when you have seen one green field, you have seen all green fields. Let us walk down Cheapside."

The foregoing remarks apply to a very great extent to the novels of Jane Austen. They are singularly silent on the subject of natural scenery. That Jane Austen herself was a lover of the beautiful in Nature

is abundantly evident from her published letters. Her novels, on the other hand, are remarkable for the almost entire absence of any description of beautiful country. Here and there, scattered throughout her writings, there may be some slight reference to the natural features of the neighbourhood, as to the coombes and downs near Exeter in *Sense and Sensibility*, to Spithead and the Isle of Wight in *Mansfield Park*, and to Beechen Cliff in *Northanger Abbey;* but the allusions are always of the slightest description. There is, however, one notable exception. We refer to the faithful and graphic picture of Lyme Regis and its neighbourhood in *Persuasion*. The passage is not too long for quotation:—

"After securing accommodations and ordering a dinner at one of the inns, the next thing to be done was unquestionably to walk directly down to the sea. They were come too late in the year for any amusement or variety which Lyme as a public place might offer. The rooms were shut up, the lodgers almost all gone, scarcely any family but of residents left; and as there is nothing to admire in the buildings themselves, the remarkable situation of the town, the principal street almost hurrying into the water, the walk to the Cobb, skirting round the pleasant little bay, which in the season is animated with bathing-machines and company; the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements, with the very beautiful line of cliffs stretching out to the east of the town, are what the stranger's eye will seek; and a very strange stranger it must be who does not see charms in the immediate environs of Lyme to make him wish to know it better. The scenes in the neighbourhood, Charmouth, with its high grounds and extensive

sweeps of country, and still more its sweet retired bay, backed by dark cliffs, where fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide, for sitting in unwearied contemplation; the woody varieties of the cheerful village of Up Lyme, and, above all, Pinny with its green chasms between romantic rocks, where the scattered forest trees and orchards of luxuriant growth declare that many a generation must have passed away since the first partial falling of the cliff prepared the ground for such a state, where a scene so wonderful and so lovely is exhibited, as may more than equal any of the resembling scenes in the far-famed Isle of Wight: these places must be visited and visited again to make the worth of Lyme better understood."

It was in the autumn of 1804—thirteen years before *Persuasion* was finished—that Jane Austen spent a few weeks with her father and mother at Lyme, and it is to the strong impression then received that we owe the above graphic description. We venture to offer the present paper as a simple, but not, we trust, uninteresting commentary on this unique passage in her writings.

Lyme Regis still remains an old-world town, quaint and picturesque; changed, indeed, since the visit of Jane Austen, but not yet vulgarised by modern improvements. Now, as then, the principal street of the little town almost hurries into the water, while the walk to the Cobb, "skirting round the pleasant little bay," is as picturesque as when the party from Uppercross strolled along it that late autumn afternoon. The cliffs above are yellow in summer-time with wild brassica and melilot, and the beach below is animated as in 1804 with bathing-machines and company. The

"rooms" which are several times referred to in *Persuasion* may still be seen; but the Cups—the "inn" at which Mr. Musgrove's party stayed—was burnt in the disastrous fire of 1844, which also destroyed the old Custom-house and the "George Hotel," celebrated as the resting-place of the Duke of Monmouth when he landed at Lyme in 1685. The Cobb, as the semi-circular stone pier or breakwater is called—the scene of the celebrated accident in *Persuasion*—was partly rebuilt after a tremendous hurricane in 1824; but the "steep flight" of stone steps which connect the Upper and Lower Cobb, and down which Louisa Musgrove fell, remain as when the famous passage was written. Lord Tennyson, we know, placed the writings of Jane Austen next to those of Shakespeare, and so the following story is not without some semblance of probability. It is said that when the great poet visited Lyme, his friends were anxious to point out to him the reputed landing-place of the Duke of Monmouth. Tennyson waxed indignant. "Don't talk to me," he cried, "of the Duke of Monmouth. Show me the exact spot where Louisa Musgrove fell!"

From the end of the Cobb a splendid view may be obtained of "the very beautiful line of cliffs, stretching out to the east of the town," past Charmouth and Bridport and the swannery of Abbotsbury, and which on a clear day may be traced as far as the white rocky peninsula of the isle of Portland. The cliffs between Lyme and Charmouth have become celebrated since Jane Austen's eulogy by the discovery in certain strata of the Lias formation of the gigantic remains of extinct Saurian reptiles. The story of the discovery of these giant fossils is worth telling, if for no other reason than that it introduces us to one of the celebrities of

Lyme—Mary Anning, the fossilist. In the month of August, 1800, four years before the visit of Jane Austen, a party of equestrians were performing in a meadow, since known as "wreck-field," situated at the back of Church Street, when a terrific thunderstorm burst over the town. The spectators fled for the nearest shelter. Three women, one of them carrying a baby, took refuge under an elm-tree. A flash of lightning split the tree, and laid the three women dead upon the sward. Strange to say, the infant was uninjured, and from having been a dull and heavy child she became from that moment, we are told, light and intelligent. That infant was Mary Anning. Her father was a mechanic—a stonemason or carpenter—one Richard Anning, who was also a vendor of curiosities.

His little shop, with shells and ammonites in the window, was situated in Broad Street, and Jane Austen must have often passed that way. In searching for fossils he seems to have fallen down the cliffs, and to have badly injured himself. He died in 1810, leaving his family in a state bordering on destitution. One Sunday morning, shortly after the funeral, Mary strolled along the shore seeking for "curiosities." She picked up an ammonite, which the night's storm had washed out of the cliff, and this she afterwards sold to a lady for half-a-crown. Delighted with her success Mary spent most of her time hunting for fossils beneath the weather-beaten cliffs. Four months later—she was now of the mature age of eleven—she discovered the first remains of the great Saurian reptiles. This splendid skeleton, which may now be seen in the British Museum, was sold for £23, and Mary's career in life was finally determined.

From this time until her death, thirty-five years later, she was constantly making fresh discoveries, and bringing to light unknown species of extinct fishes and reptiles, which have made the cliffs of Lyme Regis famous in the scientific world. She is said to have possessed a sort of intuitive knowledge as to where the fossils lay embedded in the cliffs; and certain it is that she made the most marvellous discoveries. Several species of Ichthyosauri and Plesiosauri she unearthed from the Lias beds, and the remains of a flying lizard, now known as the Pterodactyl. These "finds" were examined by such eminent scientists as Professor Buckland and Conybeare and Cuvier, who were able, from the fragments of bone submitted to them, to form an ideal restoration of the osteology of these mighty reptiles. One skeleton, which Mary Anning found entire, measured more than twenty-four feet in length. This monster is described by Cuvier as having the snout of a dolphin, the teeth of a crocodile, the head of a lizard, the extremities of a cetacean, and the vertebræ of a fish. The Plesiosaurus differs from the Ichthyosaurus in having a long neck, like the body of a serpent. More curious still is the Pterodactyl, or flying lizard. The specimen described by Professor Buckland was about the size of a raven; in shape somewhat like a bat, with the bill of a woodcock, and the teeth of a crocodile, and covered with scaly armour, like the dragons of romance. It is needless to say that the unpretending little shop in Broad Street, with the notice, "Anning's Fossil Depot," written on a small white board over the doorway, was well known to many of the most distinguished men of science of the day.

The Undercliff towards Pinny and beyond it, "with

its green chasms between romantic rocks," which Jane Austen compares to "the resembling scenes of the far-famed Isle of Wight," is even more "lovely and wonderful" than when she saw it. Thirty-five years after her September visit a further landslip occurred, which produced a scene perhaps without parallel in the British Isles. It took place on Christmas Day, 1839, when over forty acres of cultivated land slowly and silently slipped away to a far lower level. Two cottages were removed, and deposited with shattered walls at a considerable distance below the cliffs, while an orchard, which still continues to bear fruit, was transplanted as it stood. The whole landslip is now green with vegetation, and the scene from below, sixty years after the disturbance, is most striking. High above, the white chalk-cliffs stand out in turrets and pinnacles. All around are irregular mounds and chasms covered with herbage and brushwood. Chaos is clothed with verdure. Vegetation runs riot among the broken hillocks. Thickets of briar and clematis form impenetrable jungles about the growing trees. The stinking Iris, with its shining sword-shaped leaves and knobs of scarlet berries, covers the more open spaces of the Undercliff, which in summer are one blaze of brilliant blue, with the blossoms of the viper's bugloss. Here and there, even in late September, the perfoliate chlora opens its orange-yellow petals to the sun, while all along the Pinny landslip the hound's-tongue is unusually abundant. You cannot mistake this stout and curious plant. Its large, soft, downy leaves and lurid-purple flowers are striking; its seed-vessels, covered with barbed prickles, will stick to your clothes like burs, and the whole plant smells strongly of mice. The old herbalists fancied that "it

will tye the Tongues of Houndes, so that they shall not bark at you, if it be laid under the bottom of your feet, as Miraldus writeth." The name, however, was probably given because of the shape and soft surface of the leaves, in contradistinction to those of the bristly ox-tongue. Other flowers may be found, although it is autumn. The beautiful white-veined leaves of the virgin thistle stand out boldly against the dark undergrowth. The little eye-bright, once a famous remedy for ophthalmia, is everywhere, and so are such coarser plants as hawkweed and ragwort and fleabane. Here and there a bushy plant of gromwell, or grey millet, may be seen. Its scientific name of Lithospermum well describes the stone-like seeds, which show white and polished in the sunlight. In one hollow, formed by the peculiar conformation of the ground, a dark pool of water is hemmed in by rushes, and pink persicaria, and the red spikes of rumex; the air is fragrant with the scent of wild-mint, while in the tiny stream, which flows from the pool, water-cress, still in flower, grows in abundance.

When, in *Persuasion*, Jane Austen writes of "the fine country about Lyme," she is only speaking the literal truth. The walk up the valley of the Lynn to "the cheerful village of Up Lyme" is full of interest and beauty. Several disused mills and factories are passed in picturesque decay. A pair of water-ousels may mostly be seen wading in the swift stream. Colway Farm, the headquarters of Prince Maurice during the famous siege of Lyme in 1644, is noticed on the right, now a simple farmhouse, but the broad drive, bordered with ancient elms leading up to the Tudor doorway, speaks of former magnificence. Tradition says that numbers of soldiers killed during the siege were buried in their armour in the meadow

below the garden. In some of the valleys near Up Lyme black rabbits may be seen scuttling about in every direction. Pheasants, too, strut along the hedgerows and about the copses where the acorns fall. In some meadows mushrooms are so plentiful in September as to give the appearance at a distance of chalk scattered over the surface of the field. Now and then a beautiful or uncommon plant delights the eye of the botanist. On one particular spot the lovely wood-vetch, with its pure white flowers streaked with bluish veins, trails luxuriantly all over the tangled brushwood. Not far distant the curious tooth-wort, a parasite on the roots of hazel, comes up abundantly every spring, while on the hill that overlooks the valley the autumnal orchid, known as lady's tresses, grows. "The extensive sweeps of country about Charmouth" will well repay the research of a naturalist. In a damp meadow, yellow with fleabane and surrounded by glorious woods, the haunt of several pairs of green woodpeckers and of jays and magpies without number, a large patch of purple colchicum, or meadow saffron—the flower differs from a crocus in having six stamens instead of three—shines in the autumn sunlight. It is a sight worth walking many miles to see. Not far distant the rare *Helenium*, or elecampane, grows in abundance. One corner of the rough meadow is covered with it. This splendid plant is dedicated to Helen of Troy, "of which herbe," says old Gerarde, "she had her hands full when she was carried off." On another spot in the neighbourhood the elecampane may also be found; and in the opinion of those who ought to know there are strong claims for regarding it as indigenous.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT OF LEGH RICHMOND'S NARRATIVES

THE *Victoria History* of the counties of England mentions four clergymen, closely connected with Hampshire during the nineteenth century, whose writings exercised an influence far beyond the range of the Diocese of Winchester.. These four are John Keble, Charles Kingsley, Richard Chevenix Trench, and Legh Richmond, whose narratives of *The Dairyman's Daughter* and *The Young Cottager* were, it rightly says, "at one time the most popular religious works in England." Indeed, it is difficult to exaggerate the favour with which these works were received. With the Bible and the *Pilgrim's Progress* they became the Sunday reading of numberless Christian households. Appearing originally in the columns of the *Christian Guardian* during the years 1809–1811, they were afterwards published separately in the form of tracts, and finally issued, together with *The Negro Servant*, in one small volume under the appropriate title, taken from Gray's *Elegy*, of *The Annals of the Poor*. The little book at once became immensely popular. Within a few years it was translated into almost all the European languages, and successive editions were published in America. Altogether it has been estimated that millions of copies have been

sold, and it has found its way alike into the hut of the Red Indian and into the palaces of kings. And, curious though it may seem, the interest excited by the narratives still continues; new editions are frequently published, and every year numbers of visitors, including many Americans, make a pilgrimage to the cottages of Little Jane and of the Dairyman's daughter, and gaze on their respective tombstones in Brading and in Arreton churchyards.

These facts present a literary problem of considerable interest. After all, the *Annals* are only tracts, and of a religious complexion no longer so predominant among Christian people as was the case a hundred years ago. But in one important particular they differ from the great bulk of Evangelical writings once eagerly read and now totally forgotten. We allude to their deep sympathy with Nature, and to the beautiful descriptions of local scenery which they contain; and it is this recognition of "delightful scenery" which separates the writings of Legh Richmond from those of contemporary Evangelicals whose works are now buried in oblivion.

For some eight years only did Legh Richmond reside in the Isle of Wight, but short though his ministry was, it left an abiding impression on the neighbourhood. Every detail of his work is now regarded with interest, and the spots connected with his narratives are sacred ground. It was in the year 1797 that he was ordained to the curacy of Brading, which at that time included within its bounds what were then the obscure fishing hamlets of Bembridge and Sandown. He also had charge of the small parish of Yaverland, with its beautiful little Norman church delightfully situated on rising ground about

THE REV. LEIGH RICHMOND
(From an old Engraving.

two miles distant. His vicar, one Miles Popple, being after the manner of the age non-resident, the curate took up his abode in the old Vicarage, a small and inconvenient house which has been since pulled down. A print of it, however, hangs in the vestry of the parish church, while a companion picture shows the interior of the church as it was before restoration in 1864. There is the eighteenth-century "three-decker"—now rightly removed—from which Legh Richmond delivered his gospel to the poor. An unsightly gallery will be noticed stretching across the west end of the building. The Early English nave is crowded with high-backed square pews, and the Oglander chapel is boarded up. In this chapel, now beautifully restored, are preserved the Communion chair and the Church Office-Book which Legh Richmond used, and within the chancel rails will be noticed the small font which in his time stood in the church, and at which he baptized the village children.

A tablet has lately been placed on the south wall of the church by the grandchildren of Legh Richmond, to commemorate his ministry at Brading; and it is worth remarking that the inscription, after duly mentioning his Christian virtues, speaks of "his graceful descriptions of the beautiful scenery of the Isle of Wight." These descriptions are chiefly confined to the corner of the island in which his ministry was cast. The *Annals* contain no mention of the romantic scenery of the Undercliff, nor of the magnificent chalk cliffs of Freshwater. The beauties of Bonchurch are not alluded to, nor the quiet charm of the old village of Shanklin. But every detail of the country around Brading was familiar to our author, and finds expression in his writings. Little Jane's cottage is situated

in the village itself, and the lane past it leads to Ashey Down, which he named his "Mount of Contemplation." The picturesque approach to the church of Yaverland, where he learnt to preach extempore, is more than once noticed, and the fine old Jacobean mansion close to the churchyard. Brading Harbour and the view from the Culver cliffs are graphically described; and in *The Dairyman's Daughter* we are introduced to the neighbouring village of Arreton, and to the pleasant country beneath the south slope of Ashey Down.

There have been many changes in the Island since the time of Legh Richmond. Steamboats and railways have rendered it easy of access, and considerable towns now flourish where only a few fishermen's huts were to be seen at the close of the eighteenth century. In those days, so we learn from John Wilkes of *North Briton* fame, who had a little "villakin" in Sandham Bay, it not infrequently took two hours to cross the Solent from Portsmouth to Ryde. The latter place was then a hamlet within the bounds of the parish of Newchurch. The towns of Ventnor and Sandown did not exist. Shanklin and Bonchurch together contained only thirty-two houses. Bembridge, now a flourishing little seaside resort, consisted of a cluster of cottages at the entrance of the haven which then stretched for three miles, almost as far as Brading church. But in spite of the railways which now traverse the island in every direction, and the upgrowth of towns consequent upon the increase of population, the beauty of the landscape is but little impaired. Now, as when Legh Richmond reclined upon the turf beneath the "triangular pyramid" on Ashey Down, a delightful panorama meets the eye from that "lovely mount of observation." To the north "the sea appears like a noble

river," with the distant towns of Gosport and Portsmouth on the opposite shore and the Portsdown hills beyond. Eastward is "the open ocean bounded only by the horizon." Southward, now as then, a rich and fruitful valley lies immediately beneath. "A fine range of opposite hills, covered with grazing flocks, terminate with a bold sweep into the ocean, whose blue waves appear at a distance beyond. Several villages, hamlets, and churches are scattered in the valley. The noble mansions of the rich and the lowly cottages of the poor add their respective features to the landscape." The parish church of Godshill is seen crowning a little eminence which rises out of the valley; while to the south-west, some ten miles away, is dimly discerned the remains of an ancient chantry, once occupied by a solitary hermit, on the summit of St. Catherine's Down.

Little Jane's cottage, which is annually visited by large numbers of persons, is still in the same condition as when she died there in the summer of 1799. For many years it was owned by a pious and cultured lady, lately deceased, who venerated the name and teaching of Legh Richmond, and who regarded its possession as a sacred trust. She would allow no alterations to be made, no modern "improvements" to be carried out. The cottage is still thatched with straw, and the original lead casements of the lattice-windows remain. Inside, upstairs and downstairs alike, nothing has been changed; and the "mean despised chamber," with its "sloping roof" and "uneven floor," remain as when the good pastor administered the Holy Communion to the dying child more than a hundred years ago. The little garden, too, is practically unchanged. A high bank, starred

with celandines in early spring, still faces it, and the cottage is covered with yellow jasmine and fragrant honeysuckle, while a large shrub of *Lycium barbarum*, or the tea-plant, forms an evergreen porch over the doorway. Last summer several tall hollyhocks were blooming in the cottage garden, and the little bed in front of the parlour window was filled with *Sedum Telephium*, or livelong, a plant which still grows wild in the neighbourhood.

In the days when "Little Jane" and the village children, under the guidance of their loving teacher, were wont to learn the epitaphs on the tombstones in Brading churchyard, the haven extended almost as far as the parish church. Legh Richmond speaks of it as "a large arm of the sea which at high tide formed a broad lake or haven of three miles in length." This estuary in former years was a famous haunt of wildfowl, and back in the sixteenth century we are told that Sir William Oglander "when itt wase froste & snowe woolde goe downe to Bradinge Havan a shootinge, where he woolde kill 40 coupell of fowle in a nyght, hee & his man." The haven has now, after many failures, been reclaimed, and large numbers of cattle feed on the rank herbage. At the extreme end of what was once "a large river or lake of sea water" there still stands, "close to the edge of the sea itself, the remains of the tower of an ancient church, now preserved as a sea mark." This is the tower of the old parish church of St. Helen's, the nave of which has fallen a victim to the encroachment of the sea. It is to be regretted that Legh Richmond was not a scientific botanist, for the sandy spit of land on which the tower stands is remarkable for its wealth of wild-flowers. Though not exceeding forty or fifty acres in

extent, it is said to yield some two hundred and fifty species of British plants. Most of these the writer has himself identified. Perhaps the most beautiful and interesting is *Scilla autumnalis*, L., the autumnal squill, which in tens of thousands stars the sandy turf with its exquisite blue flowers every August and September. And, strange to say, this plant is nowhere else to be found in the county of Hampshire. But though there is nothing in his writings to show that Legh Richmond was acquainted with the rarer plants of the Island, yet he frequently alludes to the extraordinary number of wayside flowers. In one instance only, so far as we remember, does he mention an uncommon plant by name. In his description of the "stupendously lofty" Culver cliffs, he adds that their "whiteness was occasionally chequered with dark-green masses of samphire which grew there." It is interesting to note that when the writer visited the spot a few summers ago, one large mass of samphire was conspicuous against the white chalk about halfway up the "tremendous perpendicular cliff."

The cottage of *The Dairyman's Daughter*—perhaps the most popular of Legh Richmond's narratives—is still standing beside the highroad that runs between Apse Heath and the village of Arreton. It lies back a little from the road, and is approached, now as then, through "a neat little garden" full of old-fashioned flowers, though the "two large elm-trees" which formerly overshadowed it have disappeared. Since Legh Richmond's time the cottage has been roofed with slate and slightly enlarged, and this unfortunately has given it a somewhat modern appearance. But otherwise the fabric is but little changed. The grey stone walls are covered with ivy and other creepers,

and "the branches of a vine" still trail above the parlour window. The interior of the cottage remains in almost the same condition as when the "good dairyman" lived there. The two corner cupboards occupy their old position in the parlour, and the door of the dairy with the original open lattice-work still swings on its ancient hinges. Upstairs, the room in which the daughter died, with the great brick chimney-stack standing out against the wall, is but slightly altered since the early summer of 1801. The present occupier of the cottage shows with pride a length of iron chain which formerly belonged to old Wallbridge, and the original chimney-rack from which his bacon was suspended. Hard by the cottage a Wesleyan Methodist church, known as "The Dairyman's Daughter's Memorial Chapel," now stands, built—in part, at least—with the offerings of strangers, whose interest in Legh Richmond's story had led them to make a pilgrimage to the cottage. Numbers of persons still continue to visit the grave of the dairyman's daughter in Arreton churchyard, marked by a headstone bearing an epitaph of much simple beauty from the pen of her pious biographer. Legh Richmond himself officiated at her funeral, and as the procession filed into the church, he mentions that, looking upwards, he observed a dial—one of the few ancient sundials now remaining in the Isle of Wight—on the church wall, which brought to his mind the Psalmist's words, "Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

Some two miles from the cottage there stood in Legh Richmond's time "a large and venerable mansion, situated in a beautiful valley at the foot of a high hill." This was Knighton, the house where

he first met Elizabeth Wallbridge, "the dairyman's daughter." It is much to be regretted that this fine old Jacobean manor-house, "the most considerable and beautiful of the ancient mansions of the Island," was pulled down in the year 1820. Standing on an elevated terrace beneath the south slope of Ashey Down, it occupied a position of great charm and beauty. Close by, in a wooded dell, on the margin of a pool of clear water, were to be seen the remains of a medieval chapel, dating back to the time of Edward III. The mansion possessed a massive square tower of great antiquity, and several rooms of considerable dimensions adorned with oak panelling and carved mantelpieces. In the long gallery beneath the roof there stood "a very large oaken chest, covered with rich niche-work and tracery, of the time, probably, of Henry IV., and possessing the original lock with tracery carved in iron." Nothing now remains of the ancient structure, save a few dilapidated outbuildings, and the massive piers of grey stone some fifteen feet in height which mark the entrance from the road. A portion, too, of the garden wall remains, with its ancient coping of red brick, on which the beautiful ivy-leaved *Linaria* grows abundantly, with here and there a delicate wall-fern, or a plant of the greater yellow celandine, or the ploughman's spikenard. The spot beside the pool where the chapel stood is now covered with the buildings of the Ryde Waterworks, and a farmyard occupies the site of the Jacobean mansion. One wonders what became of the ancient chest of curious design, and the dignified oak panelling which enriched the rooms. Some of the latter seems to have found its way to a cottage in the village of Brading,

where a room may be seen panelled with ancient oak and with a stately Jacobean mantelpiece, which tradition associates with the dismantled manor-house of Knighton. Nothing could exceed the quiet beauty of the scene when the writer visited the deserted site a few summers ago. From one of the gables of the farm-buildings a female kestrel-hawk was calmly surveying the surrounding stubble. Scores of rabbits were feeding and scuttling about at the foot of the noble down. A squirrel was playing in the branches of a magnificent elm-tree. Swallows were skimming over the pool, in which, according to tradition, a former owner of the property, overwhelmed with grief at the sudden loss of his wife and children, committed suicide. In the copse beside the stream which issued from the haunted pool the rare marsh-fern (*N. thelypteris*, Desv.) was growing abundantly, and splendid specimens of purple foxglove covered the rising ground. Not a sound was to be heard, save the murmur of innumerable insects, and the notes of a willow-wren in the coppice beyond.

In the quiet beauty of the parish of Brading Legh Richmond found a constant source of refreshment and delight. The wide open downs were dear to him, and the chalk cliffs and the seashore. On his frequent rounds of pastoral visitation, often to distant parts of the parish, his mind would be occupied with the contemplation of nature. "How much do they lose," he exclaims in one of his narratives, "who are strangers to serious meditation on the wonders and beauties of nature!" To his mind "the believer possessed a right to the enjoyment of nature, as well as to the privileges of grace." And this feeling, which shows itself in his graceful descriptions of local scenery,

still gives interest to *The Annals of the Poor*. The attitude of Legh Richmond towards nature finds exact expression in the beautiful lines of Cowper's *Task*, with which doubtless he was acquainted :—

> " He looks abroad into the varied field
> Of nature, and though poor, perhaps, compared
> With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
> Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
> His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
> And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
> With a propriety that none can feel
> But who, with filial confidence inspired,
> Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
> And, smiling, say, 'My Father made them all.'"

THE END

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